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ABSTRACT

These six theme-oriented newsletter issues present specific curriculum planning ideas and activities for teachers of young children. The theme of the January-February 1997 issue is "The Arts of Winter." Topics in this issue include celebrating with music and movement, learning songs, classroom visitors and the arts, art in picture books, big indoor art projects, and the art of winter cooking. The theme of the March-April 1997 issue is "Global Adventures." Topics in this issue include developmentally appropriate multicultural activities, creating a global village, multicultural prop boxes, an animal safari with books, and St. Patrick's Day fun. The theme of the May-June 1997 issue is "A Happy, Healthy Spring." Topics in this issue include basic health and safety skills, changes in spring, children's gardens, healthy spring cooking, and dealing with picky eaters. The theme of the July-August 1997 issue is "Messy Learning." Topics in this issue include the importance of messy play, organizing messy classroom areas, fun with play dough, learning with mud, cleanup tips, and sand play. The theme of the September-October 1997 issue is "Organize Your Classroom." Topics in this issue include creating lesson plans that work, helping children organize themselves, displaying children's art, and planning for the unexpected. The theme of the November-December 1997 issue is "Friends and Families." Topics in this issue include the classroom as a family, learning to be a friend, developing language skills with family and friends, families in many cultures, and family fun with toddlers. (SD)

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Vol. 18 No. 1 *For People Who Care for Young Children* January/February 1997

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THEME:

The Arts of Winter

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Celebrate with Music and Movement
- Learning Songs for Toddlers
- Classroom Visitors and the Arts
- Art in Picture Books
- "Blanket of Snow" Quilt
- "Warm" Projects When It's Cold Outside
- Big Indoor Art Projects
- The Art of Winter Cooking
- And Lots More!

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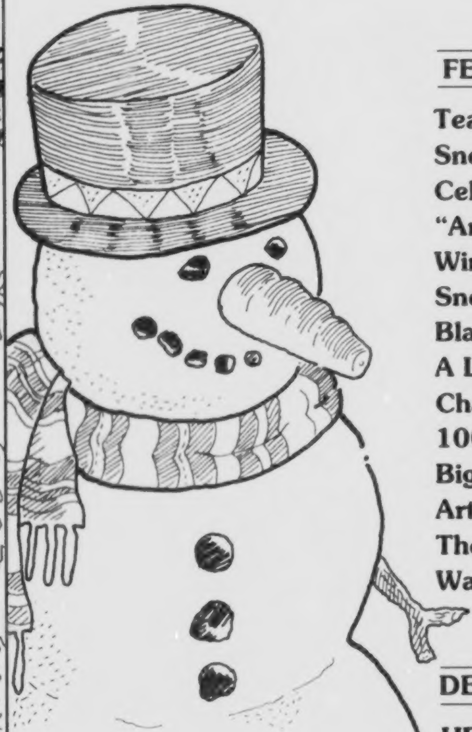

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

In this issue of *First Teacher*, our first of 1997, we encourage you to celebrate the arts with your pre-schoolers. It's never too early to introduce fine music, creative movement and dance, famous works of art, children's literature, and even the "art of cooking" to young children.

We start by exploring music and movement in the early childhood classroom. Do you plan experiences for your children that encourage creative movement? Do you incorporate high quality music into your program? Sherry Burrell introduces you to an exciting workshop that can help you plan "key experiences" in these areas. Music is very important even in the toddler classroom. Jeannine Perez shows you how to make up songs to familiar melodies to fit each learning occasion. And Susan Entz suggests creative movement activities with a winter theme.

Children's literature should always play an important role in your program and Sandra Malcolm shows you how to weave winter books through all areas of the curriculum including math, science, language arts, dramatic play, and music. Karel Kilimnik reviews a variety of books with a winter theme that you can plug into your everyday curriculum at this time of year, using Malcolm's suggestions.

Barbara Backer introduces you to 25 illustrators of children's books who work in a wide variety of styles that will give your pre-schoolers new ideas for their own artwork.

Famous works of art can also help children tap their creativity.

Gail Jones will show you how to integrate works of artists such as Rockwell, Kandinsky, Seurat, and Wang Yani. Then you'll learn 100 ways to paint a picture that you can share with your children. They can use some of these techniques to imitate the styles of famous artists or illustrators.

Large indoor art projects are fun on dreary winter days. Make use of rolls of light-colored or white craft paper for the nine creative projects described in this issue. Susan Root helps you extend children's outdoor experiences in winter into your Art Area when children do "art with ice."

Cooking can be an art form which combines tastes, textures, and colors. Try "French Toast Snowmen" and "Snowflake Breadsticks" this winter.

So brighten up the dull, gray days with music, movement, art, and literature. It will make you feel warm inside.

Coming This Year in *First Teacher*

- **Global Adventures**
- **A Healthy, Happy Spring**
- **"Messy Learning"**
- **Organize Your Families and Friends**

In 1998:

- **Exploring Numbers and Letters**
- **Games for Growing**
- **Alive and Growing**
- **Beat the Heat**
- **Learning Centers**
- **Holiday Magic**

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HELPFUL HINTS

ARTS WITH HEART

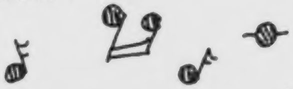
by Gail P. Jones

1 In the art center, let children choose favorite pictures or laminated copies of works of famous artists that are half covered with art paper. Challenge them to complete the missing half. Perhaps they would enjoy creating stories to go with the pictures!

2 Encourage photography by using an inexpensive camera and donated film. (Many parents would be willing to chip in for developing such "artistic endeavors.") Let children select a good background, lighting, and subjects for their photographs. Framing the idea with a picture frame before taking the picture also helps. Preserve sculptures and block creations unable to be saved with photos!

3 In honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, share a copy of his portrait by Patrick Hill. Talk about how no two people have exactly the same skin color. Encourage children to paint portraits of people they love. Show them how to create a variety of skin colors for their paintings. (Give them yellow, white, brown and red to get them started).

4 While inside during the winter months, make cooking an art experience also! Using cardboard stencils and sprinkling powdered sugar on cake tops or muffins and/or using icing tubes on cookies brings out the most reluctant artists! Let children create works of art for snacktime "food exhibits"!



5 Since February is National Music Month, why not have a "Share and Listen" day for each child to bring in a tape or song their family loves? And, don't forget to use music throughout the day to lift spirits and warm the soul!

6 February wouldn't be February without hearts, so let's make some hearts and write *"What is love..."* thoughts in words that make heart shapes!

7 And, for the making of hearts, give small pieces of paper folded to your younger children and ask them to cut or tear around their thumb pinching the fold. It's a heart! Challenge children to use their foot, elbow, or knee for larger hearts!

8 Winter need not be dreary if you bring some poetry into the classroom. Children will soon want to write or dictate their own Valentine poems with some inspiration from poets such as Shel Silverstein and rhymes from Mother Goose! Perhaps you can get them started with variations of *"Roses are red; violets are blue."*

9 A fun game to play that introduces red, pink, white, and purple for Valentine's Day is Musical Scarves or Streamers. Use the colors mentioned. The group forms a circle and four to eight children dance to music inside the circle. When the music stops, each child changes places with someone in the circle.

TEACH WITH MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

by Sherry Burrell

If there's one thing we can count on every day when we work with young children, it's that there WILL be movement in our classrooms! Whether or not we PLAN movement activities, they will happen. As naturally as children breathe, they move. Most of us realize the importance of children's natural freedom of movement. We intuitively realize that trying to stop a young child's ability to move around is like trying to hold water in one's hand. We know that movement affects motor development, but do we think about how important it is to the child's cognitive development and language acquisition? Through movement, neural pathways are formed inside the brain, and these pathways contribute to the development of creativity, problem-solving skills, memory, and more.

When teachers consciously PLAN movement activities for their young children, even greater gains in the child's foundations for learning can be achieved. How might a teacher find high quality music and movement activities that are specially geared to the needs of young children?

Fortunately, there is a superb nationwide program that provides training for teachers. It is Phyllis S. Weikart's *Education Through Movement: Building the Foundation* sponsored by High/Scope. Phyllis S. Weikart, Associate Professor Emeritus of Kinesiology at the University of Michigan and Movement Consultant for the High/Scope Foundation, has spent more than 35 years helping children and adults develop rhythmic movement skills.

In this workshop, some topics (taken from the workshop flyer) include:

- **"Discovering the Nine Key Experiences in Movement"** In this section, teachers "learn why these key experiences are so important and how they will help increase children's movement skills." These key experiences help teachers to "learn ways to encourage their students' development of critical thinking skills, timing ability, attending skills, and creativity."
- **"Experience Many Movement Ideas"** In this part of the workshop, teachers "improve their ability to select and initiate age-appropriate activities that support curriculum concepts." They learn how to help children develop accuracy in moving to a musical beat, how to increase children's comfort and awareness through meaningful movement activities, and how to explore ways to encourage children to use their own ideas for movement activities."

"Understanding How to Use the Teaching Model" Teachers "learn to separate spoken instruction from visual demonstrations. They explore methods to simplify movement tasks, and they discover how to facilitate students' understanding of the movement sequence."

Many of today's elementary and middle school teachers comment on their students' inability to keep a beat to a simple tune, to recall basic nursery rhymes, or to set a steady beat of their own. Teachers of young children are put on alert to watch for signs that their students might need more conscious exposure to music and movement activities. They learn to expose children to skills that are no longer being acquired in the home.

In the Fall 1995 edition of *Early Childhood Connections*, Phyllis S. Weikart's article on "Purposeful Movement: Have We Overlooked the Base?" she states, *"we observe children who lack basic balance and coordination, awareness of what their bodies can do, awareness of purposeful movement in personal and general space, steady beat, independence, the ability to sing developmentally appropriate melodies, as well as basic comfort and ease of movement."* Weikart notes: *"television viewing seems to have replaced children's natural play....interactive and active neighborhood games, family chores, and outdoor activities have diminished.... and high-tech appliances and lifestyles have almost eliminated the physical exertion children once used in helping to wash dishes, hang clothes out to dry, sweep and vacuum, pump water, hoe the garden..."*

Gone are the days of nursery rhymes, rocking chairs, and street games! What might a teacher today do to combat this trend toward diminished movement skills in young children? You can learn to plan specific music and movement activities for young children that will replace those "key experiences" children may not be getting in today's fast-paced, high-tech society. You can attend a session on *Education Through Movement: Building the Foundation.*

For further information regarding a workshop series near you, write to Phyllis S. Weikart, 15141 Sheridan Road, Clinton, Michigan 49236, or call her directly at (517) 456-4346.

TODDLER TIME

SING A SONG OF LEARNING

by Jeannine Perez

Music is a wonderful way to communicate with young children. Toddlers love the music of words and the magic of melody. Children clap and move to rhythms and rhymes with confidence and natural ability. In our toddler room, we sing directions, express feelings, and tell stories in song. We can laugh at our mistakes in a song, make up nonsensical sounds, say thanks, or ask questions. Sometimes we can turn away anger, lighten sadness, or soften good-bye pangs with a simple tune.

As with all learning experiences, you should begin with the familiar and then proceed to the unknown. Learn a few basic songs and then use the tunes with your own words.

SING A SONG OF SOFTNESS

Use quiet songs to defuse explosive situations and to ease smoothly into circle and naptimes. Sing familiar songs in different ways; fast and slow, in your outside voices and in soft whispers. Think of as many quiet words as you can (*whisper; soft; quiet; murmur; shush; marshmallow*) and words that put beautiful pictures in your minds (*rainbows; clouds; roses; rabbits; babies; Mommy and Daddy; trees and tulips*) and incorporate some of the words to familiar tunes. Here is one of the quiet songs. Put it together to the tune of "Sing a Song of Sixpence." End the song by humming and tiptoeing to circle or naptime cots.

Sing a song of softness,
A pocket full of clouds.
Sing a song that's gentle,
With nothing hard or loud.
Sing a song of softness,
Softly hum to me...
(Hum the last few lines.)

SING A SONG OF ACTIVITIES

Winter is a wonderful time to sing about what is seen, heard, and felt; both inside and outside. Try to sing about what you do and what you feel through your senses.

LET'S GO TRAMPING

(Tune: "Are You Sleeping")

Let's go tramping,
Let's go tramping,
In the snow, in the snow.
Crunch, snow underfoot,
Tracks following behind.
Away we go.
Through the snow.

Let's go sliding,
Let's go sliding,
On the ice, on the ice.
Smooth and slippery cold,
Pick up some to hold.
Feels so nice,
Cold, cold, ice.

Have fun thinking of winter words, "cold" words, and words that tell what you can do for fun outside.

You can sing this next song—and act it out. The tune is a great one to use because it is repetitious and words can easily be changed to express children's ideas. You also could put this song together on a cold and windy day, when outside time is limited to less time than it takes children to get dressed!

NORTH WIND

(Tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Blow, blow, cold North wind,
Biting at my nose.
Slippy, drippy, nippy days,
Feel how the cold wind blows.

Blow, blow, cold North wind,
You're the only one who knows,
Why flowers are gone,
And birds fly south,
And where warm summer goes.

SING DIRECTIONS

It is easier to follow directions that are sung or chanted, whether those directions help in picking up toys, washing hands and faces, or putting on shoes after naptime. You can sing many directions to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

Now it's time to pick up toys,
Helpful, happy, girls and boys.
OR
Wash your hands and hurry back.
Time to eat our morning snack.

SING NONSENSE...JUST FOR FUN

Children love to sing sounds that mean nothing, but are fun to roll off the tongue (that's why children love to name dinosaurs). Encourage children to make up their own words and sing them to tunes. Giggle over words or phrases that are silly. Small children have a great sense of the ridiculous!

Here's a silly song. Take turns changing the "menu" to include other gross combinations. Sing this to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?"

Boysenberry gravy,
Pour it on potatoes
Sprinkle it with raisins
And eat it with a straw!
Plan a little party
And ask your favorite frog!
Don't be late.
We hate to wait.

Watermelon pizza,
Made with lots of catsup,
Marshmallow stew.
It's good for you.
Cabbage pickle cake,
We eat all that we bake,
'Til our faces turn blue!
You can have some too!

SEE IT...SING IT

Some songs encourage observation and conversation. All my children love to sing "The Bear Went Over the Mountain."

The bear went over the mountain,
The bear went over the mountain,
The bear went over the mountain...
To see what he could see.
And all that he could see,
And all that he could see,
Was the other side of the mountain,
The other side of the mountain,
The other side of the mountain...
Was all that he could see.

Apply this to everyday happenings.

The ball went over the fence,
The ball went over the fence,
The ball went over the fence...
As far as it could go.

The milk spills on the table,
The milk spills on the table,
The milk spills on the table....
And puddles on the floor.

Once you begin singing all the time, you'll find that laughter and singing are contagious. Sing your way through the day!

SNOWSHOES AND SLEIGH BELLS

by Susan Entz

Bundle up your students for a walk through the neighborhood to look for activities unique to winter. Take a camera with self-developing film on the walk so you can take snapshots of the activities children identify. They may see people involved in any of the following:

- slipping and sliding on ice
- ice skating
- sledding
- snow blowing
- snow shoveling
- using snow removal equipment
- stoking the furnace
- building a snowman
- throwing snowballs
- skiing—down hill or cross country

Also point out different physical phenomena such as icicles melting, a gentle snowfall, or the aftermath of a sleet storm.

Return to the classroom and direct the class in a creative movement activity. Have children make a list of the winter activities they observed. Write one per card and attach an appropriate photograph. Place all of the cards in a "Frosty the Snowman" top hat. Draw cards at random and direct the class to move accordingly. (*"Pretend you are a snow plow clearing a path."*)

After having observed the weather, note the differences between a gentle snowfall and a driving storm. Direct children to move as a snowflake would in different weather conditions. Skate indoors in a pair of old socks brought from home. Scatter cornmeal on the floor and then have children make gliding motions on this surface. Play the *Skater's Waltz* in the background.

PLAY "FREEZE"

Show children how to pretend to *slip* and *slide* on ice and then encourage them to pretend with you.

Suddenly call *"Freeze,"* having the class stop in their current positions like statues. Encourage children to look at the different positions children have struck.

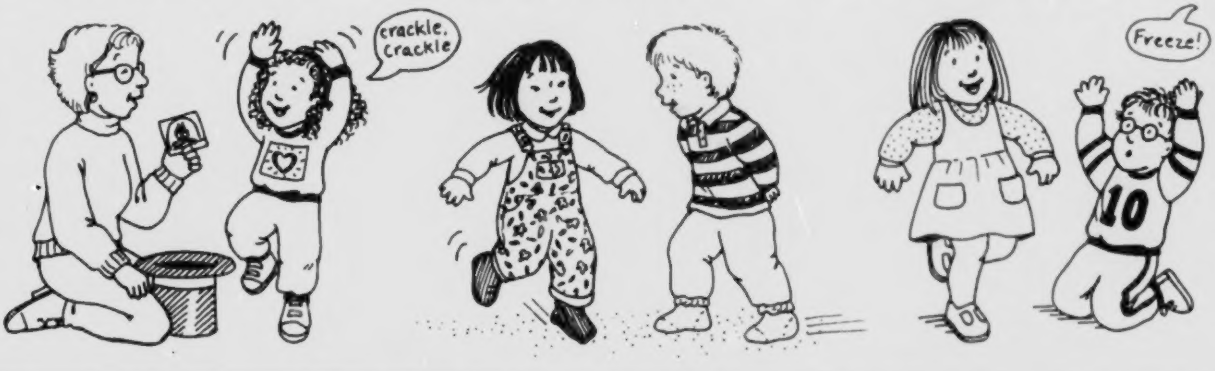
Then return to slipping and sliding, until the next *"Freeze"* command.

This activity encourages children to control their actions within a freeform movement activity.

SNOWMAN ROLL

Read *Frosty the Snowman* as an introduction to this creative movement activity. Then have children spread out in a large open space. Have the class imitate your movements as you scoop up snow to form a snowball.

Then bend over to put the snowball down and pretend to



roll it into a bigger ball. Encourage children to imitate your motions.

Then guide children verbally as they push and struggle to make an even bigger ball. Two children may need to work together to push their huge snowballs. This big ball will be the snowman's body.

Now make a ball to form the head. Direct children to bend over and pick up this heavy snowball head. Put it on top of the body.

Pantomime poking holes for the eyes, a nose and the mouth.

Play the *Frosty the Snowman* record or tape that often accompanies the book and model walking like a big, bulky snowman.

BIG BOOTS

The first sign of snow is often an occasion for great excitement. Capitalize on this "teachable moment" with a creative movement activity. Have children sit on the floor and pretend to put on their great big winter boots. Then put on a heavy winter coat, a scarf, and mittens to go out into the snow.

At first, have children pretend to play among the gentle snowflakes as they fall from the sky. But then the storm gets worse and there is a lot of snow. Have children pretend to walk through deep snowdrifts, jump in a two-foot snowbank, and then make angels in the snow. Finish by going home, taking off the clothes and of course, the big boots!

SNOWSHOES

In areas that get a lot of snow, children put on great big snowshoes to walk on deep snow. Children can make their own snowshoes from men's sized shoeboxes. Cut a simple hole in the lid of each box and then tape it to the box.

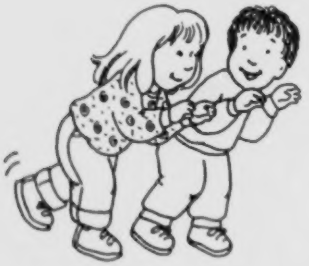
The child slips each foot through the holes and then can pretend to walk through Alaska, or hike through the Yukon.

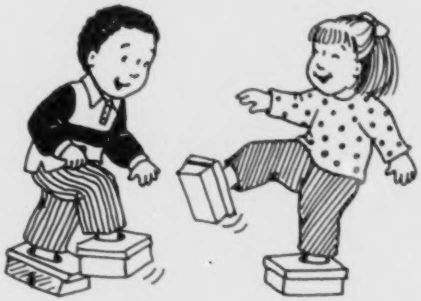
SLEIGH BELLS

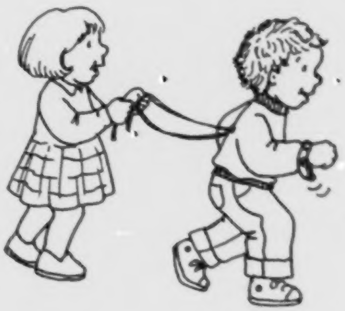
During the holidays, children may have seen horses with bells pulling a sleigh full of joyful people in person or on television. Remind them of this experience with a photograph of a horse outfitted for a sleigh ride and ask if they would like to pretend to be these huge, but beautiful animals.

Prepare by stringing a simple set of bells on an elastic long enough to fit over a child's wrist or ankle and then sew the loop closed. Make several sets.

Some children may want to drive the team. Pin the middle of a very long ribbon to the "horse" so the driver can hold the ends of each rein as the horse pulls the sleigh.







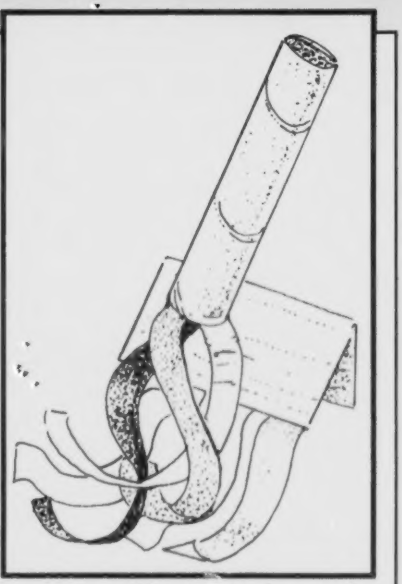
CELEBRATE WITH MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

by Margery A. Kranyik

Celebrate winter! Have a party, a parade, or a festival! Invite other classes, families, school friends, and members of the community.

Pair up children in wheelchairs with scooters pulling the child. Encourage the visually impaired by holding the child's hand, describing the motion and helping to move feet or arms, if necessary. Hearing impaired children can be positioned and helped through signing.

- If you live in a climate that "enjoys" a long, cold, and snowy winter, begin by talking about what happens to day and nighttime hours in this season. Review and discuss how our lives change when it is dark by the time we have our evening meal. Have children generate winter weather words and ideas. Try: *"Tell me what you think about and want to say when you hear the word 'winter'."* Make a chart. Determine which words are related to a motion or movement. Write each word on a card cut in a favorite pattern or shape. Word possibilities might include: *slide, skid, glide, shiver, skate, ski, sled, slip, shovel.* Have a child choose a word and have the group demonstrate the word with their bodies—skiing motions, pretending to skate, slipping on ice. Encourage the shy child by asking, *"How would you walk if you were walking on a sidewalk covered with ice? Skating on the rink or pond?"*
- Explore your rhythm instrument box to find instruments that could provide appropriate sound effects for the words that "move." Help children by suggesting: *"Can you find an instrument that sounds like skate blades on the ice? The blowing wind? Sleet on the window?"*
- Have a winter dance fest centered around an outdoor tree or tree branches imbedded in sand or cement in the classroom. Help children move to appropriate music while they wave scarves or streamers. (Make streamer props by folding a 3- X 5-inch index card in half, placing the ends of several crepe paper strips inside and stapling the open ends of the card together to hold the streamers in place. Or staple streamers to the inside edge of empty plastic or foil wrap rolls.)
- Make paper loop chains for children to hold as they move. Develop a routine where children alternately walk, slide, tiptoe, and twirl. If music is unavailable, use drum beats. Try moving to "Troika" from *Lieutenant Kije Suite* by Prokofiev. Using the tree as a focal point, have children move as if they were a tree blowing in the wind during a storm. *"Can you make sounds like the wind?"*



- Take your celebration outdoors. After a snowstorm, have children make snow sculptures. Use the figures as an obstacle course, having children move **in front, behind, around,** with **light, heavy** steps. Use rhythm instruments for background effects. Color the "statues" with water dyed with food coloring in squeeze detergent bottles.

  Refer to *The Piggyback Song Book* (Warren Publishing) for winter songs to add to your celebration or choose a familiar tune and have children make up appropriate words. Teach the songs to your audience and have a Snowy Sing-Along.
- Create a group movement activity to the music "Sleigh Ride" by Leroy Anderson or any of the winter-theme dances in *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky.

Capitalize on your climate. Use whatever resources are available to you in your winter season. With some thought, winter can be celebrated everywhere with children of all ages and stages of development.

"ARTSY" WEEKLY WINTER VISITORS

by Karen Stephens

Getting the winter doldrums? Liven up your classroom with weekly visitors. Once you put your mind to it, classroom visitors can be easily found.

It's always smart to start close to home. This immediately makes you focus on parents. Survey them to see who has special talents and who is willing to share them with a group of children. After surveying parents, spread the word through your school, neighborhood, and community that you are looking for people with artistic talent.

Wondering what type of artists you can invite into your classroom? Well, the list can be as long as your imagination is strong. Delve into the passions of the people who live around your children and you are sure to uncover plenty of special visitors eager and willing to share their talents with your class. Here's a list of ideas to get you started. See if you can find any of these artists in your hometown. (And when thinking artist, remember to look beyond the obvious! Anyone who truly loves their hobby brings a lot of art to their passion.)

Once you locate special visitors, don't forget to take time to prepare them for spending time with young children. Each visitor should try to include children in some "hands-on" activities. Remind them of safety issues, as well as the characteristics, interests, and the attention span of your children.

Before a special visitor comes to your classroom, prepare children for the experience. You might choose to do this with a children's book, video, or photographs or samples of the visitor's artwork. Have a camera on hand to help children remember and revisit the experience long after the visitor's presentation.

Following special visits, don't forget to include children in the process of writing a Thank You note and drawing Thank You pictures. Children may also talk into a tape recorder to create a Thank You tape. All are great language activities, but more importantly they teach children to be appreciative, respectful, and courteous.

Special visits can also be followed up by creating a Dramatic Play corner based on the visitor's art. For instance, after a photographer visits, you can set up a pretend camera store or a portrait studio. Create these dress-up areas using old cameras and camera bags, empty film canisters, tripods, photo albums, discarded vacation and family snapshots, a cash register, play money, and recycled photo sleeves with negatives in them.

- Actor/Actress
- Candy Maker
- Cake or Cookie Decorator
- Candle Maker
- Dancer: ballet, jazz, clogger, etc.
- Figure Skater
- Florist
- Greeting Card Illustrator or Writer
- Glass artist: stained glass, glass blowing
- Ice Sculptor
- Jewelry Maker
- Knitter
- Macrame Artist
- Mime
- Musician: harpist, violinist, etc.
- Orchestra Conductor
- Photographer: nature or portrait
- Painter: watercolor, oil, etc.
- Poet
- Potter
- Puppetier
- Quilter
- Singer: folk, opera etc.
- Snow Sculptor
- Tap Dancer
- Weaver
- Wood Carver
- Wreath Maker
- Writer/Author
- Yoga Instructor

WINTER ARTS–IN PICTURE BOOKS

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

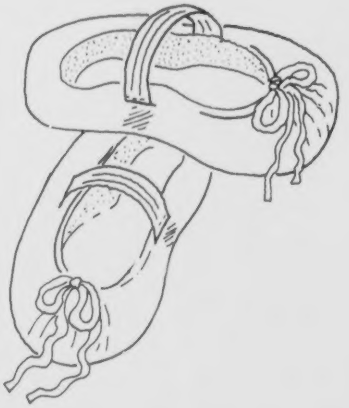
There are a variety of well-written picture books that introduce youngsters to the many arts of winter.

ART

- In *No Good in Art* (Greenwillow Books), Lillian Hoban writes with her usual sensitivity about a subject to which young children can relate. In Kindergarten, Jim's art teacher makes corrections on his drawings. In first grade, Jim has a different art teacher who invites students to draw what they want to be when they're grown. Jim is the only child not drawing because he doesn't think he's good in art. However, when the art teacher suggests Jim paint something he likes, Jim's imagination soars. The other children like his drawing so much they speculate that Jim will become an artist someday.
- Lenore Rinder shows how a child turns a blob of paint into a beautiful painting in *A Big Mistake* (Gareth Stevens Publishing). The illustrations by Susan Horn depict a realistic view of a child's lap with drawing pad and hands visible. The child splashes the paint while crying over the blob, but then blows on the paint, and adds details and splats to create a wonderful circus scene.
- A boy named Charlie secretly watches an artist, Gregory, paint everyday beside the lake in *All I See* by Cynthia Rylant (Orchard Books). Eventually Charlie and Gregory meet and Gregory teaches Charlie how to paint and provides him with his own art supplies.

DANCE

- Harriet loves her ballet classes but doesn't like recitals in *Harriet's Recital* (Carolrhoda Books) by Nancy Carlson. On the day of the recital, Harriet is sure she'll forget her dance. Once she's on stage and starts dancing, however, she's fine.

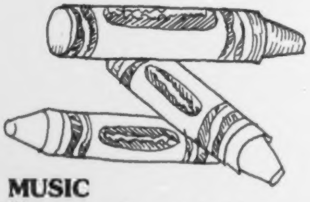


- In Patricia Lee Gauch's *Dance, Tanya* (Philomel Books) little Tanya loves to dance and imitate the movements of her older sister, Elise. Tanya is too young for ballet lessons, but sometimes she watches Elise practice and she attends Elise's dance recital. At home with her relatives, after the performance Tanya puts on her tutu and dances. Everyone claps. At Christmas, Tanya gets a leotard because now she's old enough to go to ballet class.
- Ann Jonas in *Color Dance* (Greenwillow Books) combines minimal text with watercolor illustrations of four youngsters who dance with colored scarves that when combined form different colors. The children's movements are those of free flowing modern dance.
- Petra Mathers offers a unique story with stylized illustrations in *Sophie and Lou* (Harper Trophy). Sophie is shy, her life safe, controlled, and structured. That changes when Dolores and Rudi open a dance studio across the street from Sophie's house. After watching the many dancers through the window Sophie is inspired to learn how to dance at home and dress in a special dance outfit. One night Lou, who's noticed Sophie over the

past few days, knocks on her door and asks if he can dance with her. They dance well together.

DRAWING

Harold and the *Purple Crayon* (Harper & Row) is the classic story by Crockett Johnson of a young boy, Harold, who draws things that become real. Then he becomes part of the drawing. Harold begins by drawing a moon, has several adventures, and then searches for his bedroom window that is always around the moon. Crockett Johnson's tale is interesting and reassuring.



MUSIC

Robert Kraus' swift moving text is accompanied by vivid, bold, full-color illustrations by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey in *Musical Max* (Simon & Schuster). Max can play any instrument and he does constantly. Max's father and all the neighbors complain about Max's music making; but Max's mother is encouraging. One day Max stops playing music. Everyone is relieved for a while, but then the peace and quiet drive them crazy. Through an entire year Max says he's not in the mood to play music, but when spring returns Max plays once more and instead of complaining everyone joins in with Max.

Striking, bold, colorful illustrations in a graphic style by Vladimir Radunsky accompany author Bill Martin Jr's playful, rhyming text in *The Maestro Plays* (Henry Holt and Co.). The maestro plays in a variety of styles and the words used match each instrument. For example, when the maestro plays *loudly* he's seen pounding on a bass drum. When the maestro plays *reachingly* he's atop an elephant while playing a tuba. He plays *flowingly* to the snakes and when he plays *swingingly* and *flingingly* he's playing a slide trombone on a trapeze.

Children enjoy Lloyd Moss' text in rhyme and Marjorie Priceman's whimsical, fluid watercolors in *Zin! Zin! Zin!: A Violin* (Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers). Children can count as each instrument is added to the orchestra from a trombone, trumpet, and french horn to a clarinet, oboe, and harp. They'll delight in the words used to describe the sound of each instrument; the trombone is *gliding, sliding, has a mournful moan and a silken tone.* Descriptions for instruments are perfect, too. The flute, for example, is a *slender, silver sliver.*

Garth Pig Steals the Show (Dutton Children's Books) by Mary Rayner is a delightful story with action and tension that also introduces children to musical instruments. Mr. and Mrs. Pig and their ten piglets form a band. The Pig family is asked to do a charity concert at Town Hall. When they realize they have many high instruments and need something booming they advertise in the local paper. On the night of the concert a lady (a wolf in a dress) arrives with a sousaphone. The wolf plots to eat a piglet for dinner but William Pig acts swiftly during the concert and thwarts the wolf's plan.

THEATER

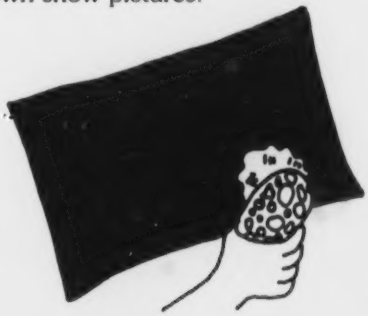
At Farm Theater, the theatrical bear family is faced with a dilemma in *Speak Up, Blanche!* by Emily Arnold McCully (HarperCollins). Their friend, Eva, has left her shy, stagestruck grandchild Blanche with them and asked if they can teach Blanche how to act. Blanche, however, can't act, or sell tickets, or collect props. What she can do well is to paint sets and she does. Everyone is thrilled.

SNOWY READING

by Karel Kilimnik

📖 I cannot write a review of children's books about snow without including the classic *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking). Despite his death many years ago, Keats' body of work lives on vibrantly. In *The Snowy Day*, Peter has a phenomenal time in the snow using his body and imagination. He makes angels, uses a stick to make tracks, gets into a snowball fight he wisely decides he is too little for, and even experiments with bringing snow inside. Frolic in the snow just like Peter. When you return inside, make up movements miming playing in the snow. Add an element of texture and dimension by creating a space to put foam peanuts for children to use as inside snow.

▶For visual arts, provide black or blue construction paper, sponges, and white paint for the children to use and create their own snow pictures.

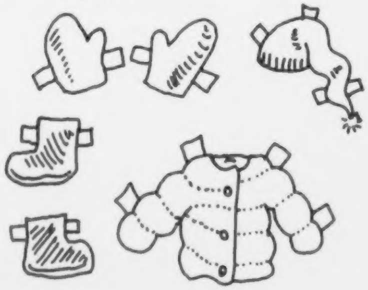


📖 David Spohn has created a lovely father-son story in *Winter Wood* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). Father turns a chore into very special together time with his young son. Wood is needed to burn in their wood-burning stove so father and son bundle up to go off for a day of splitting wood. They carefully layer their clothing for the cold and snowy weather and slowly prepare for the task ahead. Each has his job to do and yet each is dependent on the other for successfully accomplishing the job together.

▶This story is rich with areas to explore with young children. A birdfeeder outside of their house attracts the little boy's attention. Explore what birds need to stay alive in winter. How do they change to survive? Make simple bird feeders by putting peanut butter on pine cones and then rolling them in birdseed. Observe the birds in your area. Get a bird book to identify them.

▶A thermometer hangs outside of the little boy's house. It says 10 degrees below zero. Bring in a thermometer and talk about what it measures—place one outside the building and one inside. Talk about what you observe.

📖 *Winter Wood* lends itself to a discussion of appropriate winter clothing. Put winter apparel in the Dramatic Play Area (both for dolls and children). Put out paper dolls with winter clothing. Look through magazines for clothing to wear in the snow and make a group mural.



▶Talk about how people stay warm—by turning on the heat, chopping wood to burn for fuel (How about a visit to a restaurant or home where wood-burning stoves are used?), drinking warm things and eating hot food, and wearing warm clothing.

▶While outside, blow and watch as puffs of little clouds appear (like they do in the story). Use pulled-apart cotton balls to create you own "winter" breath inside on paper.

📖 *Prize in the Snow* by Bill Easterling (Little, Brown) is a tender tale. The illustrations put you right in the middle of a snow-covered forest. You feel as if you are surrounded by snow-shrouded evergreens ready to shed some snow at the mere hint of a breeze.

In the story, a young boy ventures into the woods with a box rigged up as a small animal trap. He is imitating his older brother who captures little creatures and then releases them. The young boy carefully positions the box with a carrot inside as bait. Lo and behold a white rabbit takes the bait and is captured! The little boy is stunned. His mind fills with questions. Will the rabbit bite me? Do rabbits even have teeth?

He gingerly lifts the box up only to find a terrified, starving rabbit staring at him. The rabbit does not move. As the boy takes it all in, he realizes what he must do to help the rabbit and arranges the carrot so that the rabbit will eat it. He tramps through the snow planning the food he will bring tomorrow to feed the rabbit.

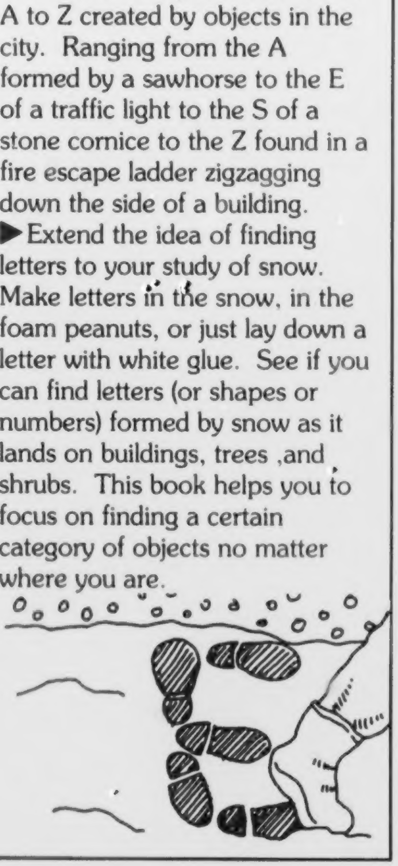
▶ This book lends itself to learning about wild animals in the winter. How do they survive? What are their needs? How can we help them? (as the boy in the story did).

▶ If there is a park or wooded area nearby, take a careful walk and look for animal footprints, teeth marks on plants and trees, lost feathers, or fur rubbed off.

📖 Even though the next book is not really about snow, it presents a wonderful leaping-off point for exploring the white stuff. *Alphabet City* by Stephen T. Johnson (Viking) at first glance appears to be photographs, but look again! The illustrations are actually paintings. Johnson writes that he has always been drawn to the energy that *"constitutes a city"* and he has certainly conveyed it in his realistic paintings (all of objects—no people or animals).

He shows capital letters from A to Z created by objects in the city. Ranging from the A formed by a sawhorse to the E of a traffic light to the S of a stone cornice to the Z found in a fire escape ladder zigzagging down the side of a building.

▶ Extend the idea of finding letters to your study of snow. Make letters in the snow, in the foam peanuts, or just lay down a letter with white glue. See if you can find letters (or shapes or numbers) formed by snow as it lands on buildings, trees ,and shrubs. This book helps you to focus on finding a certain category of objects no matter where you are.



"BLANKET OF SNOW" QUILT

by Connie F. Venier

Imagine your children's excitement when you announce, *"Today, we'll be playing in the snow."* No need to put on those coats and mittens. Don't worry if you live in a warm, sunny climate! This activity will have the flavor of outdoors, but the warmth of inside. Each child will have the opportunity to create her own snowflake quilt square.

YOU'LL NEED: blue felt squares (one per child) ◆ nontoxic acrylic white paint ◆ paintbrushes ◆ white shoelaces—40 inches long (one per child) ◆ a paper punch (Scissors can also be used by making a tiny snip for a hole.) ◆ a pencil with an eraser.

WHAT TO DO:

1. Measure and cut felt to an 8 X 8 inch square. With a paper punch, punch holes around the felt, 1/4 inch from the edge.

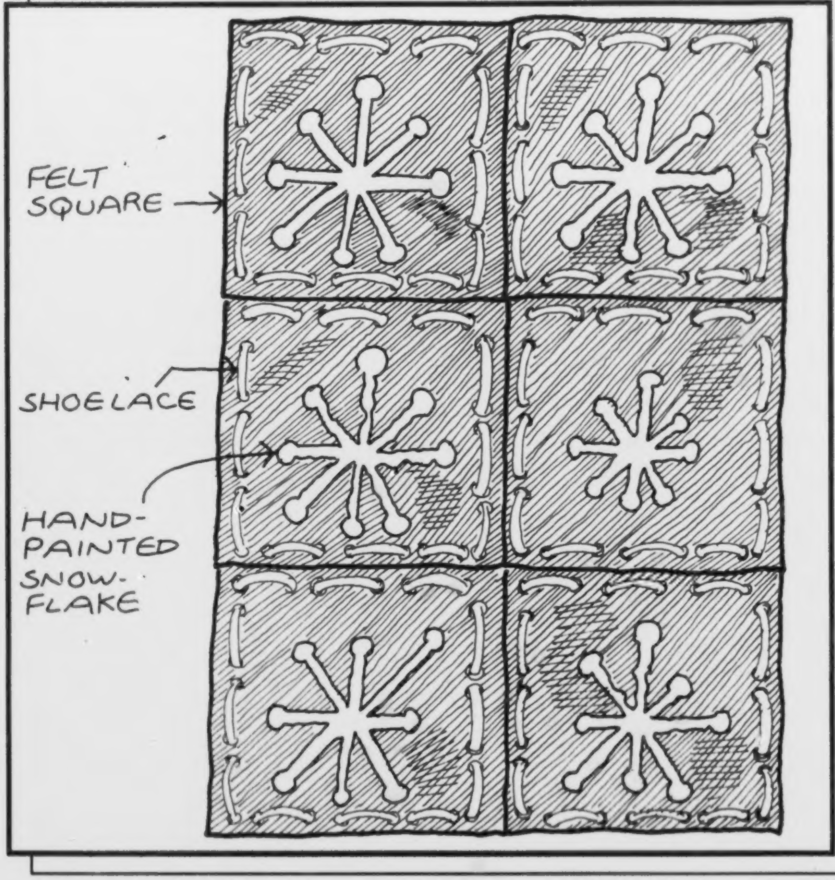
2. Have each child lace up the felt square with the shoelace. Knot one end of shoelace so it won't slip through. In the rhythm of sewing, have the child go up through one hole and down the next hole. When sewing is completed, knot the two ends together.

3. Under the watchful eye of an adult, allow each child to paint a snowflake on her felt square. You may suggest starting with a long line and intersecting other lines on top. Have children dip the end of the pencil eraser into the paint and stamp the shape at the end of each line. Keep in mind that no two snowflakes are ever alike! Set aside to dry overnight.

4. To form the quilt, display squares together on a bulletin board with pins. Conceal the pins under the laced stitches.

If time permits, a story could follow activity, relating to the snow. Some suggestions: *Geraldine's Big Snow* by Holly Keller (Greenwillow Books), and *Snow* by Roy McKie and P.D. Eastman (Beginner Books).

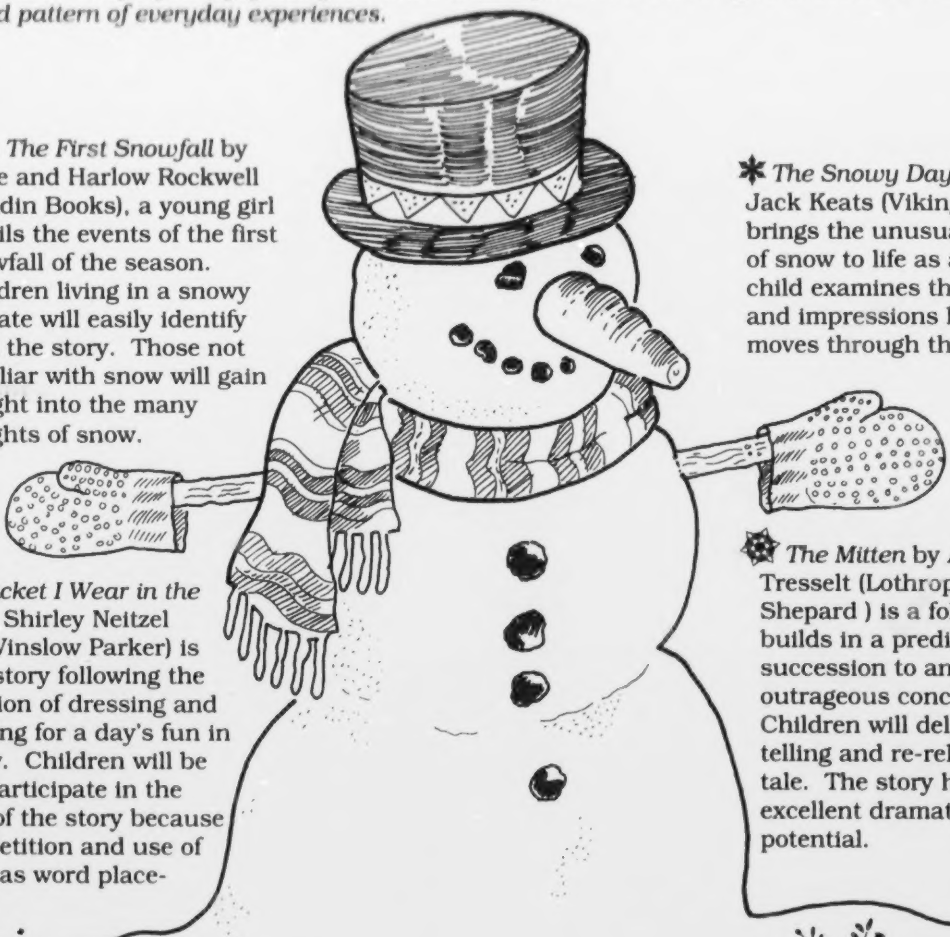
At the conclusion of this activity, the child has demonstrated her own creativity as well as exercising her motor skills.



Literature Supports the Curriculum

by Sandra Malcolm

Usually we begin with a children's book and build activities around the reading of the story. However, there are advantages to using a children's book to support an activity or experience being provided. The incorporation of a story into the content will help children see its relevance. The four books chosen to support the activities in the Book Corner all have a winter focus. They will be used to enhance the concepts introduced in the curriculum areas. An emphasis has been placed on the arts—art, music, dramatic play, and language. However, activities in social studies, math, health, and science have also been included. I hope you enjoy using literature to web your curriculum together in an intricately connected pattern of everyday experiences.



- In *The First Snowfall* by Anne and Harlow Rockwell (Alladin Books), a young girl details the events of the first snowfall of the season. Children living in a snowy climate will easily identify with the story. Those not familiar with snow will gain insight into the many delights of snow.

- *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow* by Shirley Neitzel (Nancy Winslow Parker) is a rebus story following the progression of dressing and undressing for a day's fun in the snow. Children will be able to participate in the reading of the story because of its repetition and use of pictures as word placeholders.

- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking Press) brings the unusual qualities of snow to life as a young child examines the tracks and impressions left as he moves through the snow.

- *The Mitten* by Alvin Tresselt (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) is a folktale that builds in a predictable succession to an outrageous conclusion. Children will delight in telling and re-relling the tale. The story has excellent dramatic play potential.

Winter Art Experiences:

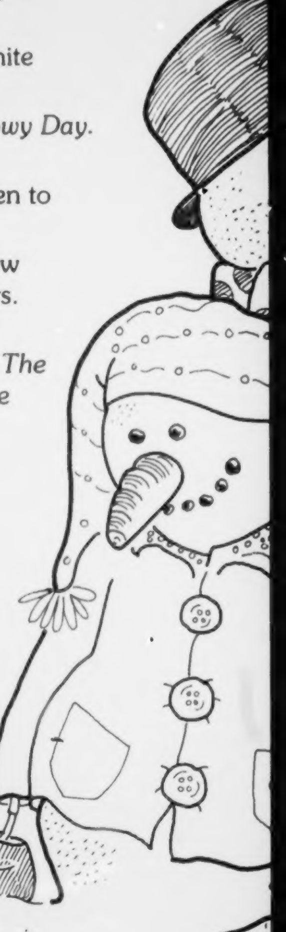
1. Provide a variety of white art media such as chalk, white tempera paint, white glue, white finger paint, white scrap paper, and so on for creating snow scenes.

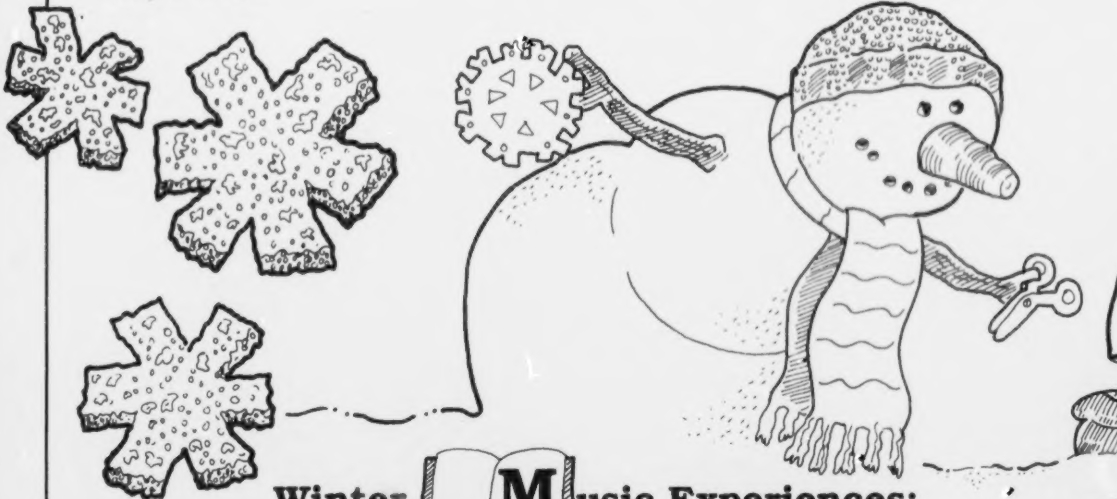
2. Encourage children to draw people doing "snow activities." Share the books *The Snowy Day.* and *The First Snowfall*. Spatter paint over the pictures to make a snowfall.

3. Demonstrate how to cut snowflakes. Provide lightweight paper and scissors for children to experiment. Remember—there is not right or wrong way to make a snowflake.

4. Using sponge pieces and white tempera paint, have children paint snowflakes and snow scenes on the windows. This will help give the feeling of a snowfall when looking outdoors. (NOTE: A few drops of liquid dish soap added to the tempera will make cleanup easier.)

5. Have children draw pictures to mount on blocks representing the pieces of clothing in *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow* or the animals in *The Mitten*. Stack the blocks in order as the story is re-told.





Winter Music Experiences:

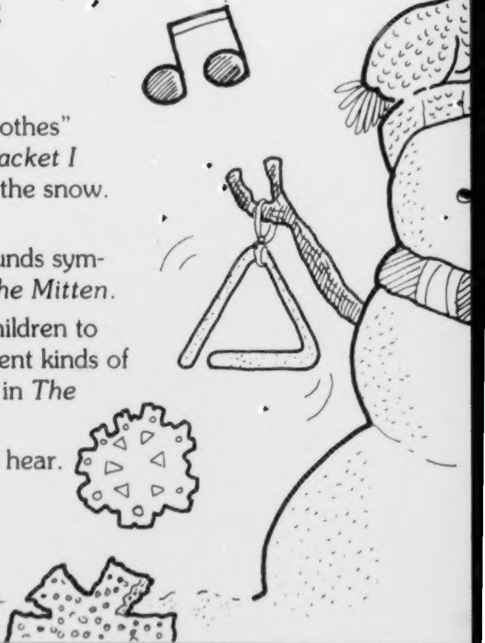
1. Share winter songs, rhymes, and fingerplays of your choice.

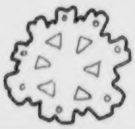
2. Using the familiar children's tune, "This is the Way We Wash Our Clothes" create a song about dressing to play in the snow. Share the book *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow*. A song could also be created about how we play in the snow. Share the book *The First Snowfall*.

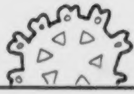
3. Add musical sound effects to *The Snowy Day* by having different sounds symbolize the various tracks. Use instruments to symbolize the animals in *The Mitten*.

4. Provide musical instruments and/or a variety of types of music for children to create their own "winter music." How does winter sound? Would different kinds of snow or snowfalls make different sounds? How? Let's listen for sounds in *The Snowy Day*. How do the sounds make us feel?

5. Play Ukrainian music so children can compare it to other music they hear. Read *The Mitten* and explain that it is an old Ukrainian folktale.







Winter Dramatic Play Experiences:

1. If you are in a snow area, plan a play time in the snow. Allow freedom to experiment with the qualities of snow.

2. Provide a large sheet to represent the mitten as children re-tell the story of *The Mitten.* Combine the music created to represent the animals (see MUSIC experiences) with the play-acting of the story to help children understand the benefits of the music they hear in movies they watch.

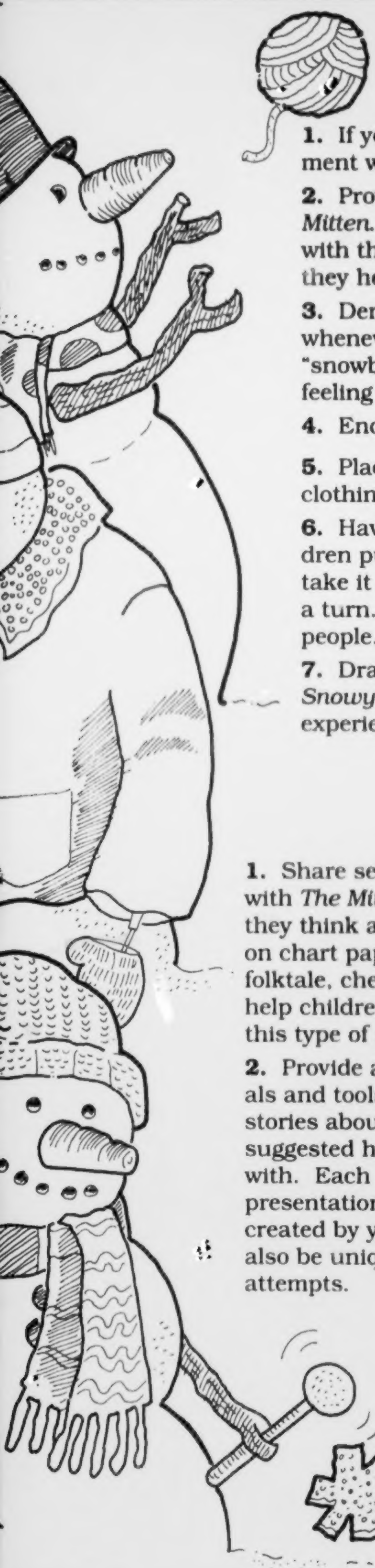
3. Demonstrate how to wind yarn balls. Encourage children to make yarn balls whenever they have free time. Keep the balls in a large box ready to be used as "snowballs" to throw and catch. Have an indoor snowball battle when children are feeling restless.

4. Encourage children to create games and activities using the snowballs.

5. Place in a large box (easily accessible to children) a selection of over-sized winter clothing that they can layer. Share the story *The Jacket I Wear in the Winter.*

6. Have a relay race using two or more sets of over-sized winter clothing. Have children put on all the clothing in their box; run to a designated area, then return and take it all off. The next person on the team then does the same until everyone has had a turn. To promote cooperation, all team members can help dress and undress the people.

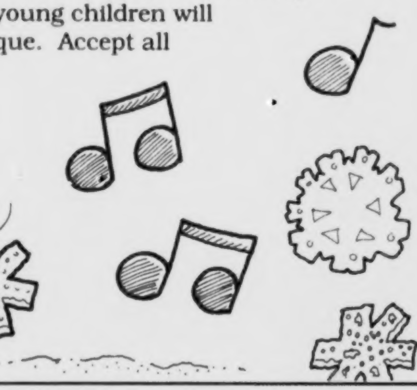
7. Dramatize the actions of the characters in the books, *The First Snowfall* and *The Snowy Day.* Add the music created to symbolize the activities (see MUSIC experiences).



Winter Language Experiences:

1. Share several folktales. Compare them with *The Mitten.* Have children discuss what they think a folktale is. Write the responses on chart paper. Each time you read another folktale, check it with the chart. Continue to help children revise their understanding of this type of story.

2. Provide a variety of writing papers, materials and tools for children to create their own stories about winter. Share the winter stories suggested here or use others you are familiar with. Each story is unique in its style and presentation of the theme. Each story created by young children will also be unique. Accept all attempts.



3. Encourage children to write songs, fingerplays, poems, and rhymes about winter. Share winter literature and make it available to children to use on their own. Provide a forum for sharing what children create.

4. Share the winter stories suggested. Discuss which stories could be true and which ones would be make-believe. How do we know?

5. Encourage children to re-tell and/or re-read the stories. Follow their lead in discussing any features of print they encounter such as capitalization, punctuation, dialogue, and so on.

6. Read both *The First Snowfall and The Snowy Day.* Compare the two for content ideas. How are they similar? How are they different?

7. Encourage children to write letters or have phone conversations between the characters in *The Snowy Day* and *The First Snowfall.* What would they say to each other?

IN THE BOOK CORNER

Winter Social Studies Experiences:

1. Use a globe to point out to children where the Ukraine is in relationship to where you live. Share the folktale *The Mitten* from that culture. Provide other information about Ukraine as compared to our country.

2. Share weather maps that show snow areas of the United States or other parts of the world. Watch how the weather changes on weekly weather maps. Encourage children to bring weather maps from local papers. Create a weather station in your room with a display area for the maps.

3. Discuss winter transportation and the importance of knowing what the weather will be like where you are traveling.

4. Show pictures of igloos. Discuss what you see. Talk about living in a house made of snow or ice. What problems would there be? Guard against stereotyping the Eskimo culture as you do this activity. Use blocks to build your own snow house.

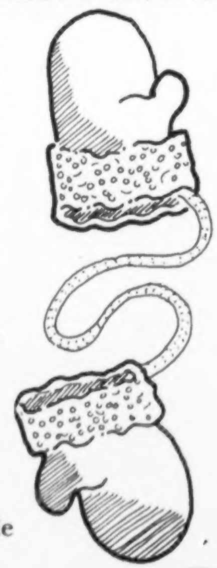
Winter Science and Health Experiences:

1. Discuss the importance of dressing for the snowy weather. Share the book *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow*. What keeps animals warm in the winter? Do they dress for winter? How?

2. Research and discuss snowflakes. How are they different? How are they similar? What causes snow? Why are some snowfalls different from others? Why can we make snowballs out of some snow, but not other types? What makes a good "snowball snow?"

3. Where does snow go when it melts? What causes it to melt? Experiment with snow or ice (if snow is not available). Why do people use salt on snow and ice?

4. Use snow (or ice) to make homemade ice cream. What causes all the changes?

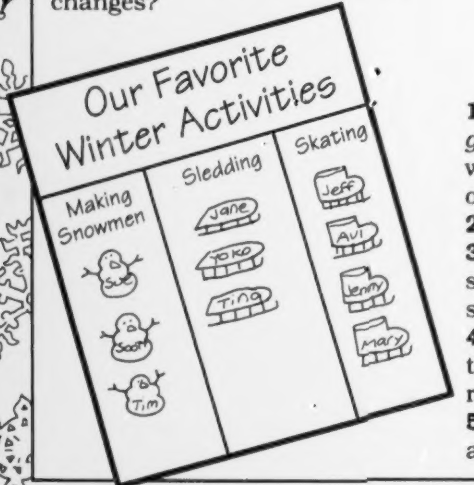


5. Discuss the reasons for not eating snow. How you could use snow to survive.

6. Discuss the feelings we have when it snows. Share *The First Snowfall*. Prepare hot chocolate to drink on a snowy day. Why does that make us feel good?

7. Provide a variety of mittens and gloves to compare. Why are some warmer than others? Experiment with the mittens and gloves. Share the story, *The Mitten*. Why did the animals think it would be warm inside the mitten?

8. Look at animal tracks and other impressions in the snow. How can we tell what made each mark? Share the story *The Snowy Day*. What kinds of tracks did the young boy make?



Winter Math Experiences:

1. Measure the snowfall in your area. Discuss the concepts of *greater than* and *less than* by talking about how much more snow we have today than yesterday or how much deeper the snow is in one part of the yard as compared to another.

2. Chart or graph temperature change from day to day.

3. Make a class graph showing how many people like winter, spring, summer, or fall. Or chart how many children like sledding, skating, or making snowmen.

4. Have a weather calendar in your weather station. Keep track of the weather each day. Count the sunny days, snowy days and rainy days. Make a graph at the end of the month.

5. Catch snowflakes and compare them. Are some bigger? How are they similar? How are they different?

A LIBRARY FULL OF ART

by Barbara F. Backer

Young children can enjoy great visual art everyday when they look at picture books. Collage, bright oils, pastels, dreamy watercolors, wood blocks, simple line drawings and more bring life to stories. You can choose books for their variety of art styles as well as for the value of the stories.

From the line art in Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Harper) to surrealistic flying frogs in David Wiesner's *Tuesday* (Clarion) to the stylized drawings of horses in Paul Goble's *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (Bradbury), let children sample a smorgasbord of delight for the eyes.

They can compare and contrast colors and textures in Ed Young's works, bright and bold in *Seven Blind Mice* (Philomel) and soft and muted in *Lon Po Po* (Philomel). Let children experience simple drawings in Helen Oxenbury's *Tickle, Tickle* (Alladin) and the sumptuous detail provided by Don Wood in *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub* authored by Audrey Wood (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

From A to Z, dip into this listing of illustrators for a taste of the variety of art available in children's books:

Anno, Mitsumasa; *Anno's Alphabet* (Crowell)

Burningham, John; *Cannonball Simp* (Bobbs-Merrill)

Carle, Eric; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Collins-World)

De Paola, Tomie; *Tomie de Paola's Mother Goose* (Putnam)

Egielski, Richard; *The Tub People* (author Pam Conrad, Harper & Row)

Fujikawa, Gyo; *Gyo Fujikawa's A to Z Picture Book* (Grosset)

Gibbons, Gail; *Tool Book* (Holiday House)

Hoban, Tana; any title—all are illustrated with photographs

Ichikawa, Satomi; *Nora's Stars* (Philomel)

Jeffers, Susan; *All the Pretty Horses* (Macmillan)

Keats, Ezra Jack; *Jenny's Hat* (Harper)

Lobel, Anita; *Allison's Zinnia* (Greenwillow)

McMillan, Bruce; any title — all are illustrated with photographs

Nygren, Tord; *The Red Thread* (Raben & Sjogren)

Ohtomo, Yasuo; *How Do I Put It On?* (author Shigeo Watanabe; Philomel)

Pinkney, Brian; *Max Found Two Sticks* (Simon & Schuster)

Quackenbush, Robert; *Mouse Feathers* (Clarion)

Rockwell, Norman; *Norman Rockwell's Americana ABC* (author George Mendoza; Dell)

Sendak, Maurice; *Where the Wild Things Are* (Harper & Row)

Tafuri, Nancy; *Jungle Walk* (Greenwillow)

Ungerer, Tomi; *Crictor* (Harper)

Van Allsburg, Chris; *Jumanji* (Houghton)

Wildsmith, Brian; *Bear's Adventure* (Pantheon)

Yabuuchi, Masayuki; *Whose Footprints?* (Philomel)

Zemach, Margot; *It Could Always Be Worse: A Yiddish Folk Tale* (Farrar)

You've noticed there is no listing that begins with X. That's because "X marks the spot!" The library is the spot—the place to look for great art.

CHAGALL IN YOUR CLASSROOM

by Gail P. Jones

If you haven't used copies of famous art in your classroom yet, you'll no doubt become as excited as I did once you do. There is an unlimited number of uses from "Find It "games to painting on the *underside* of your tables!

The first thing you'll need are copies of famous artists' works. The library has books you can use, but it is better to get prints you can laminate or cover with plastic to use with children. Calendars and art stores may be good sources. Also, *Instructor Magazine* had a famous painting in each issue for several years if you have old copies. *Reader's Digest* has a famous works of art on the back cover in every issue (and has for years!) Can you imagine how excited I was to realize I had about eighty saved!

Make a file box to keep in the Art Center. Let children choose their favorite works of art for inspiration. Challenge them to recreate the colors and techniques the artist used. Let them arrange their own still lifes for painting and give them props such as berets and cardboard pallets. (Celebrate Cezanne's birthday on January 19th!)

- If you have been using thematic teaching, the first place to start might be getting whatever copies of prints you can and fitting them into your present units. For example, Kandinsky's "*Layers*" works in every early childhood classroom with shapes and colors. Children can identify the shapes, create their own collages, and discover the many shades of color in their world.
- Famous works of art can be used for discussion starters, imitating movements and poses, dramatic play, and having a party for the famous artist whose birthday happens to be in that month. (For example, Norman Rockwell's birthday is in February. Let children wrap presents that he would like such as clothing and objects in his paintings that they can then use in their centers. They could use various prints as inspiration for stories and dramatic play.)
- Another fun project is using dots as Seurat did in his method of Pointillism to teach color blends.
- When children return after the holidays, they may have seen the New Year's Mummer's Parade on television. Share Jacob Laurence's painting "Parade" with them and discuss what they see in it. Let them create costumes and strut to the music of "Oh! Dem Golden Slippers." Compare that music to the parade music of John Philip Sousa when you celebrate President's Day in February. At that time, you can share the painting of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutz. Children can act out the scene or paint their own version while listening to the music of famous composers who have birthdays in February such as Handel (Feb.23rd) and Chopin (Feb. 22nd).
- For Valentine's Day, you may wish to use Jan Vermeer's painting of the "Love Letter" to inspire writing cards and messages of love. Show children works of Marc Chagall who was called the "Painter of Love" and how he told stories in his paintings. Challenge them to paint a story about something they love.
- Winter activities are prevalent in many famous art works such as those by Grandma Moses and Norman Rockwell. Share Hendrick Avercamp's picture of the "Winter Scene with Skaters Near the Castle." Let children play "I Spy" with the painting and ice-skate with stocking feet on a slippery floor to the "Skater's Waltz." Combining art with music is natural.
- Since the Chinese New Year begins February 7th this year, why not share Wang Yani's painting, "Lion is Awake." (Save any copies for introducing the month of March that "comes in like a lion"!) Tell children that

this young Chinese artist had her first art exhibit at the age of four! Let them listen to Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* as Yani does to inspire her painting. Give them fingerpaints or feather dusters to paint a wall mural while listening and moving to the music.

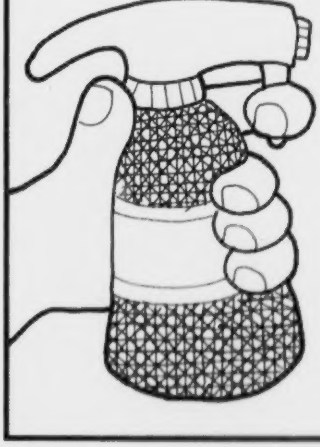
You're probably already thinking of many ways you can incorporate famous art and music in your classroom by now, but, just in case you need a starter... Guess whose birthdays are in March? Bach, Van Gogh, and Michelangelo. Let children paint their "Sistine Chapel ceilings" on the underside of a table with oil pastels or non-drip media!

MODERN ART MAKING

SQUEEZE

BOTTLE PAINTING

YOU'LL NEED: empty plastic starch bottles ◆ water ◆ poster paint ◆ clothespins ◆ large sheet of paper ◆ old newspaper ◆ tape



WHAT TO DO:

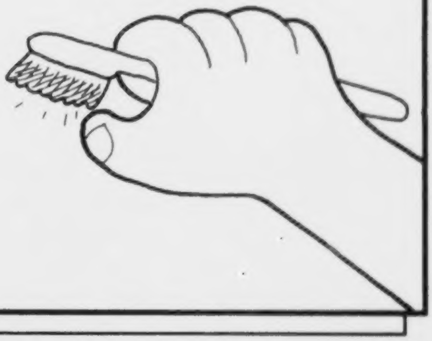
1. Fill each plastic starch bottle with one color of poster paint which has been thinned with water so it squirts out easily.
2. Clothespin a large sheet of paper to a fence (or tape to a newspaper-covered wall). Have the child stand back about three inches and squirt paint onto paper. It sprays, it drips, it blends colors!

SPATTER PAINTING

YOU'LL NEED: old toothbrush ◆ large roll of paper ◆ old newspaper ◆ poster paint

WHAT TO DO:

1. Roll out a long strip of paper on newspaper-covered floor.
2. Use toothbrush to spatter paint around paper. Have a child load brush with paint, hold it over paper and draw his thumb across bristles of the brush.



100 WAYS TO PAINT A PICTURE

by Jeannine Perez

Many adults worry so much about the "right" way to create art that they never get around to painting. By encouraging experimentation and creativity, we can help children practice making choices, increase problem-solving skills, and begin to make predictions and comparisons.

It does take planning to keep a balance between encouraging choices and creativity, and preventing the chaos of children painting other children in totally non-directed art. Plan several activities that are supervised and others where children are free to experiment. Also plan clean-up techniques before starting. Ask parents for help and have buckets of water, newspapers, sponges, and towels readily available.

CHOOSE YOUR TOOLS

◆brushes/straws/combs ◆pine boughs/cones/sticks ◆bottles/cans/spools (for printing and stamping) ◆cardboard single and accordian-pleated (to stamp and scrape) ◆pipecleaners/feathers ◆fingers and other appropriate body parts ◆sponges: different shapes (use clip clothespins as handles) ◆string/yarn/rope/twine (dip into paint and drop/plop on paper) ◆small blocks wound with string or twine or wire (for stamping and rolling) ◆crumpled pieces of paper: paper towels/tissue/newspapers/foil (compare results) ◆medicine dropper/cotton swabs/meat baster (drop on colors) ◆deodorant roll top bottles (cleaned and filled with thinned paints) ◆toothbrushes/scrub brushes/paint brushes ◆rag strips tied to a stick/crumpled plastic wrap (lay over wet paint for textures) ◆pencils with new erasers (to create stamp-dots of color) ◆cookies cutters and other kitchen utensils ◆grasses/seed pods/tall weeds/vines ◆rocks/pebbles ◆corncobs/charred pieces of wood from wood fire (messy to use, but fun)

USE ALL KINDS OF PAINTS AND COLORINGS:

◆tempera paints (thin to thick) ◆tempera powdered/tempera mixed with powdered soap or glitter ◆watercolors ◆fingerpaints ◆food coloring diluted with water ◆dried-up markers dipped in water ◆berry juices ◆colored tissue paper scraps ◆shaving cream ◆plasticene clay in vivid colors ◆acrylic paints (for plastics and fabrics) ◆white glue and water mixed with tempera or coloring ◆mud/dirt/sand ◆crayons/chalk/pastels

PAINT ON MANY SURFACES:

◆paper; all kinds (absorbent/colored shelf/newsprint/gift wrap/waxed paper/old newspapers/comic strips) ◆rough rocks and smooth stones ◆bark ◆boards ◆foil ◆old art projects used as backgrounds for new pictures ◆rags/sheets/burlap/canvas ◆sidewalks/windows/tabletops ◆mirrors ◆plastic coffee lids ◆foam meat trays ◆coffee filters/paper towels (for dropping colors or dipping) ◆posterboards/cardboard/boxes ◆glossy magazines ◆vinyl ◆old placemats (vinyl or straw)/tablecloths ◆wallpaper sample books ◆paper doilies (good frames for small pictures, or use them as stencils)

FUN ART PROJECTS

WATER PAINTING

The least messy painting (mistakes simply evaporate) encourages children to draw large and freely. This painting is best done on sidewalks on warm and sunny days, using buckets of water and large brushes. A much messier, but joyful, activity is to paint pictures on sidewalks, windows, or glass doors (use tempera paint mixed with powdered soap). Or outline an oval that is face-sized on a long mirror, and let children look into the oval and paint a figure around it. They may wish to paint party dresses, clown outfits, or animal shapes around their reflected face.

STAMPED PICTURES

Use purchased stampers or homemade ones cut from sponges or old rubber innertubes. Use clip clothespins as handles or glue shapes onto wood blocks. Purchase a stamp pad or use a sponge or folded paper towel and thinned tempera paint. Winding twine or string around a block of wood to stamp abstract lines makes interesting textures in your pictures. Use strong geometric shapes, houses, or organic shapes. You can stamp designs or pictures over old artwork papers. Use old newspapers as a background and dip sponge squares, rectangles, and triangles in black tempera paint. Stamp the sponges in building shapes on the classified columns of the newspapers for the silhouette of a cityscape at night. Add small yellow painted windows to some of the buildings.

TABLETOP PRINTS

A formica or other easily cleaned tabletop allows for tactile fun. Use fingerpaints or white or colored shaving cream, and let children experiment with finger designs. Then lay a piece of paper (white or colored) over design and ask children to pat and rub. See how many prints can be made. Then compare the similarities and differences in the prints. Use smocks and supervise this activity closely.

MARBLE AND SMALL CAR PRINTS

Marble prints are easily done by cutting colored or white paper to fit inside a shoe box lid. Stir several shades of thinned tempera in small margarine containers, and drop a marble in each color. Help children pick up the paint-covered marbles with plastic spoons and drop them in the lid, then gently tilt the lid back and forth. The resulting designs look like fireworks when done on black paper and sprinkled with glitter. Marble prints are good examples of accidental art. Dipping the bottoms of small cars in thinned tempera paints and running them across big sheets of paper creates a more planned line design that can be embellished with drawings and stamps.

CLAY PICTURES

Give each child some small pieces of bright colored plasticene clay and show them how to warm the stiff clay by rolling and kneading in your hand (a satisfying activity in itself). Give each child a piece of cardboard or small plastic meat tray. Tell children to put each warmed-up ball of clay on the base and then take fingers to spread, smear, and make designs. Encourage children to overlap and mix the colors. You can make pictures (sunsets and volcanoes are exceptionally successful) or make satisfying abstract designs. The finished projects can be displayed on bulletin boards or walls, or the clay can be scraped off and reused.

BURLAP PICTURES

Staple burlap squares smoothly and tightly to thick pieces of cardboard, and paint designs with thick tempera paint. Painting the background white or pastel, then adding a picture or design of another color before the background completely dried, makes a very attractive picture. Snow scenes are fun also.

BIG INDOOR ART PROJECTS

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

When it seems as though each winter day stretches out longer than everyone's energies and enthusiasm, it's time for some fresh art ideas designed to keep everything (and everyone) humming happily along. A mid-winter purchase of a roll of white or light-colored craft paper, coupled with crayons, markers, or paints, can easily invite a big, brand-new perspective on indoor art. These rolls are available from teacher supply stores or discount warehouses. You might want to share the purchase (and the fun) with other winter-weary parents or teachers.

Roll out a length of craft paper on the floor. Then, use this jumbo list of craft paper ideas to warm-up those winter days.

- Create a floor map of your school or community. Invite children to place blocks on the map to represent various buildings. They may then use toy vehicles and characters to make the neighborhood come to life.
- Decorate a length of paper to represent a doorway puppet theater. After taping the decorated theater across a doorway, children may put on a show by crouching down behind the paper and holding puppets over the edge for the audience to see. Or, you might consider cutting a hole in the paper and having children decorate a series of papers to represent backdrop scenes from a story they are planning to tell with puppets.
- Regard the paper as a possible dollhouse floor plan. First talk about the rooms in a house. Then draw and plan each room together. Try gluing down bits of carpeting, tiles, or fabric to simulate floor-coverings. When done, add doll furniture and dolls. No doll house supplies? Try creating your own homemade dolls and furniture from recycled cardboard boxes, bottle tops, spools, and clothespins. The book, *Dollhouse Magic: How to Make and Find Simple Dollhouse Furniture* by P.K. Roche (Dial) can help offer design and construction ideas.
- Use the craft paper to create a thematic table cloth for an impromptu class celebration. Invite children to personalize the "cloth" with illustrations, scribble-scrabbles, or designs.
- Place small animal stencil shapes on an overhead projector and enlarge the shapes onto the craft paper (attached to a wall). Remove the paper and place on the floor; decorate the shapes and cut out.
- Have children retell a favorite story by illustrating a series of

scenes on the paper in correct sequence from left to right. Help them discuss and plan what they will draw, then have children work in pairs over a few days to finish the work. Add captions for each scene, or draw dialogue balloons for each character and have children dictate words for you to print in each balloon.

✎ Use a length of the paper as a giant, oversized scratch pad and have children dictate lists for you to copy on the paper. Post the list and add to it on a continual basis. For example, children might begin a list of favorite things to do in school or a list of foods they love to eat and then add more items over time. These jumbo lists provide lots of room for large print and plenty of children's illustrations.

✎ Use the paper to trace around children's body shapes and then decorate the shapes to resemble:

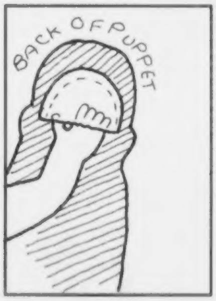
◆ favorite characters from books or movies
◆ friendly monsters
◆ super-heroes
◆ sports figures
◆ community helpers
◆ cartoon characters
◆ school personnel
◆ parents (for parent/teacher conference-time decorations)
◆ snowpeople

ME PUPPETS

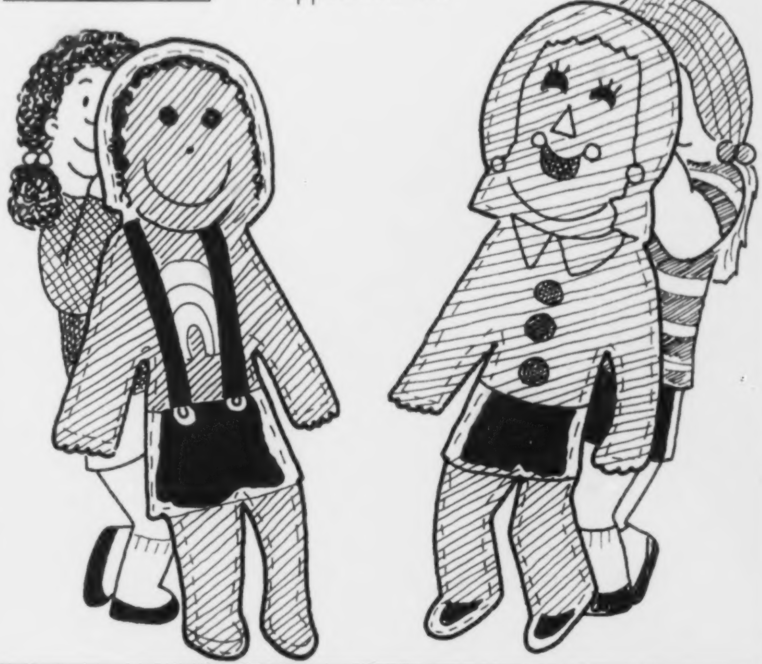
YOU'LL NEED: stapler or glue ▲ paper plate— cut in half ▲ old newspaper ▲ 2 sheets of mural-size paper—for each puppet ▲ felt tip markers, crayons, or paint

WHAT TO DO:

1. Trace each child's body onto large paper.
2. Place 2 sheets of paper together and cut out 2 outlines.
3. Draw or paint in features, hair, clothing.



4. Use glue or stapler to put 2 outlines together.
5. As outlines are being glued or stapled, crush up newspaper and stuff each section.
6. Staple paper plate half onto back of puppet's head so a hand can be slipped into it.



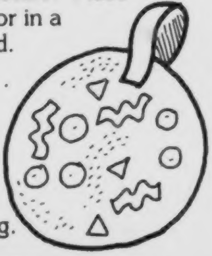
ART WITH ICE

by Susan M. Root

In many areas of the country, snow and ice are frequent visitors through the winter months. We can extend children's experiences outdoors into the art area as we offer them opportunities to explore these concepts through different media. This is also a good time to introduce the "cool" colors of blue and purple and contrast them with the "warm" colors of summer. Here are some ideas to open up new ways for children to explore winter.

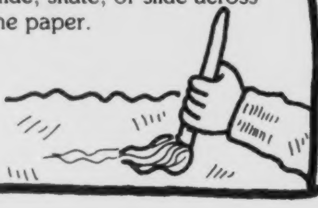
Ice Pictures

Fill a pie pan about halfway with water. Have children place bits of colored foil, paper, sequins, and ribbon in the water. Make a yarn or ribbon loop and place one end in the water; this will be the hanger for the ice picture. Place the pie pan outside or in a freezer until it is solid. Then hang your ice picture in an entryway or outside of your classroom windows. It will be fun to see how long it lasts before melting.



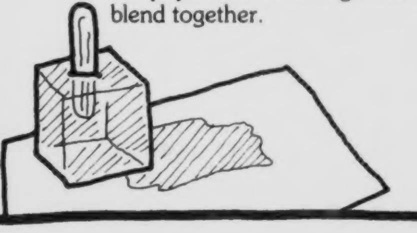
Painting on Ice

Cover pieces of cardboard or cut-up cereal boxes with aluminum foil and secure with tape on the back. Give children small brushes or Q-tips and containers of blue, purple, and white paint. Talk about how the brushes glide, skate, or slide across the paper.



Ice Cube Painting

Freeze ice cube trays with colored water that has food coloring or a small amount of tempera added to it. You can add craft stick handles if you like. Children will enjoy sliding the ice over the paper and watching colors blend together.

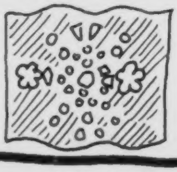


Ivory Snow Painting

With a wire whisk, egg beater, or small electric mixer, beat water into Ivory Soap powder until it is smooth and creamy. Children will enjoy fingerpainting with the snow especially on a blue or black background. My students enjoy using craft stick "plows" to push the snow into piles. Allow the snow creations to dry overnight.

Snowflakes, Snowflakes

Place a paper doily or a plastic doily (*Yard Sale Find:* plastic covers for dresser tops) over a blue paper and tape in place. Children can use sponges dipped in white paint to print all over the paper. When the doily is removed, lovely snowflake shapes will appear.



Ice Sculptures

Freeze water in a variety of containers. Place the frozen blocks of ice in a water table or large tub. Give children shakers of salt and have them sprinkle salt on the ice. The salt will cause cracks to form in the ice. Children can use watercolor cakes in blue, purple, and magenta to paint the sculptures. They will enjoy working the paint into the cracks and crevices.

Ivory Snow Modeling

This project works well with kindergarten and school age children. They can work individually or in small groups. Allow them to mix the Ivory soap powder and water themselves until it can be molded. You will see them using problem solving and discussion as they decide if they need more powder or more water. Then, children can make their own snow creations.

Ivory Snow Soap

Mix Ivory Soap powder, water, and food coloring until it is thick enough to be patted flat like play dough. Use small cookie cutters to cut out shapes and then let them harden on a windowsill. Children will enjoy these special soaps in the classroom or at home in their bathtubs. They make wonderful gifts as well.

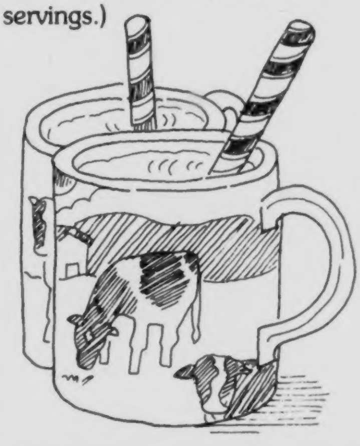
THE ART OF WINTER COOKING

by Tania K. Cowling

It's winter and time to incorporate this theme into our cooking curriculum. Use recipes with seasonal shapes and/or white ingredients for a snowy flair. On these pages, there are recipe activities for the classroom. Some need cooking facilities and others do not.

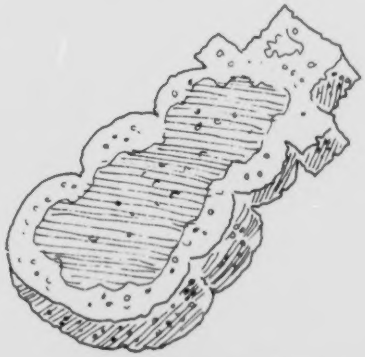
HOT WHITE CHOCOLATE

In a medium-sized saucepan, melt 2 ounces of white baking chocolate and 1 cup of water over medium heat. Stir this constantly. When it is fully melted, bring this mixture to a boil and then bring the temperature down to simmer. Stir in 3 cups of milk and heat this until it is warm. Remove the pan from the heat and beat the milk with a wisk until foamy. Serve the white chocolate in mugs with a dash of cinnamon or a peppermint stick inside. (Makes 6 servings.)



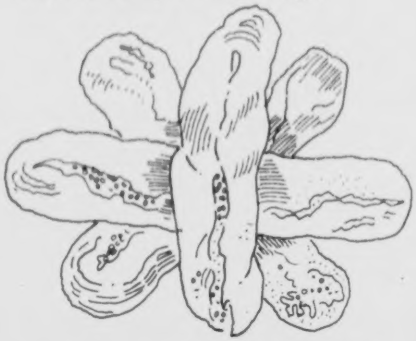
FRENCH TOAST SNOWMEN

Using cookie cutters, cut a snowman from each slice of thick white bread. In a shallow bowl, crack 2 eggs and beat until foamy. Add 1/2 cup milk, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, a dash of salt, and mix the ingredients well. Heat a griddle or frying pan to medium-high heat. Grease the pan with shortening or margarine. Dip the bread shape into the egg mixture coating each side. Place it on the griddle and cook on each side till lightly browned. Serve these yummy snowmen on a plate with maple syrup.



SNOWFLAKE BREADSTICKS

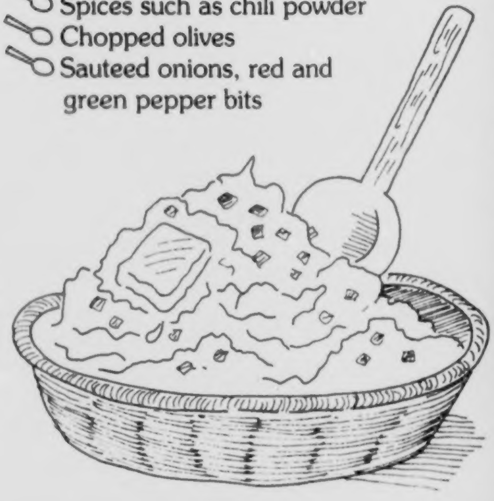
Buy refrigerator breadsticks from the grocery store. Roll this dough into small snakes. Place one rope onto the baking pan overlapping with other small ropes intil you have a six-spoked snowflake. Bake as directed on the package label. Continue making snowflakes until you have used up all the dough.

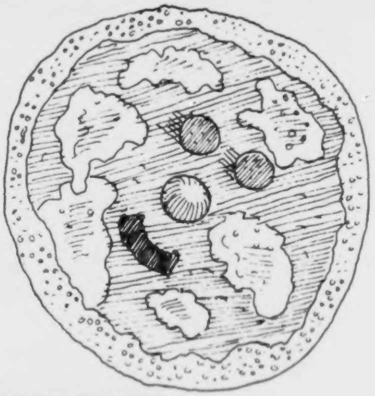


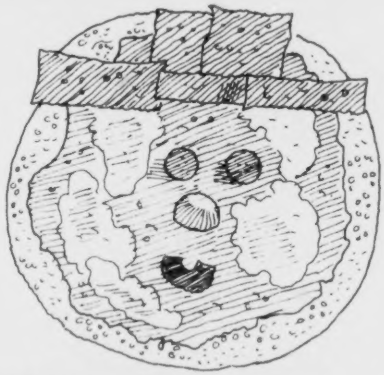
MASHED POTATO TOPPINGS

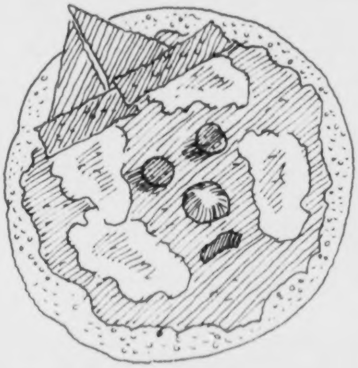
Make traditional mashed potatoes and decorate your spuds with these topping ideas:

- Crumbled cooked bacon
- Toasted sesame seeds
- Salsa
- Chedder and Parmesan cheeses
- Fresh herbs such as basil
- Spices such as chili powder
- Chopped olives
- Sauteed onions, red and green pepper bits



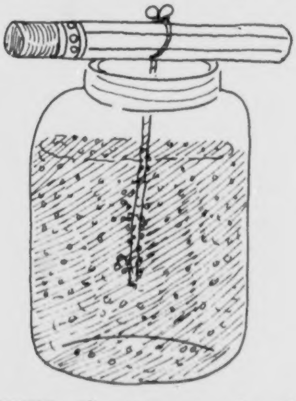






ROCK CANDY

As this sugared water evaporates, it forms a sweet crystal candy on a string. Bring 1 1/2 cups of water to a boil in a saucepan. Remove this from the heat and add 3 cups of sugar, stirring until it dissolves. Slowly add an additional 3 cups of sugar, reheating the water if necessary. When all the sugar has dissolved, pour this mixture into three glass jars. Tie a length of string around the middle of a pencil. Lay this on top of the jar and have the string hanging down into the sugared water. Do the same procedure for each jar. Crystals will begin to form in an hour and continue to solidify for several days. When all the water evaporates the crystals will be ready to eat.



(NOTE: If you want colored rock candy, add food colors to the warm sugared water in the procedure above.)

YUMMY CREAMY CHEESE

Color and flavor your cream cheese with these additives. In a bowl, soften 4 ounces of the cream cheese with about a tablespoon of yogurt for a smooth consistency. Add any of the following and spread this treat on crackers, bagels, fruit, and so on.

Olive Cream Cheese: Add about 1/2 cup of chopped olives, black and green.

Strawberry Cream Cheese: Crush 6-8 fresh or frozen strawberries, then add this to the cream cheese mixture.

Cinnamon/Raisin Cream Cheese: Add about a 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon and a tablespoon of raisins to the cream cheese mixture.

Pineapple Cream Cheese: Add crushed pineapple (in heavy syrup; drained) to the cheese mixture.

RAINBOW SNOWBALLS

Scoop vanilla ice cream in a ball. Roll this in colorful and tasty sprinkles. Serve immediately or place each ball into a cupcake paper and freeze until a later time.

WINTER WALDORF SALAD

Cut several apples into chunks. Add chopped walnuts and raisins to the bowl. Fold in Cool Whip topping and mix. Serve cold.

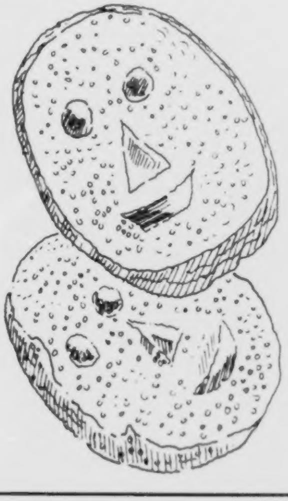
SNOWMAN PIZZA

Bake a frozen pizza according to directions. Remove this from the oven to a plate and decorate with the ingredients listed.

Hat: salami or ham strips
Eyes: pepperoni slices
Nose: cherry tomato (cut in half)
Mouth: black olive halves

WHITE POTATO FACES

Peel the potatoes and slice them about 1/8 inch thick. Place the potato on a cutting board and using cake decorating tips, cut out eyes, nose, and mouth. ADULT melts shortening in a pan and fries these potato faces until done and lightly brown. Drain these on a paper towel. Eat and enjoy! (NOTE: Adult supervision is necessary.)



WARM YOUR WINTRY WEATHER

by Barbara Fischer

> *"You'll sing a song and I'll sing a song*
> *and we'll sing a song together.*
> *You'll sing a song and I'll sing a song*
> *and warm our wintry weather."*

Endless days of rain, snow, or biting cold can dampen everyone's spirit. If your winter season seems unusually long, take heart. Ella Jenkins, in the song above, reminds us that there is an art to coping with a winter that seems to last forever. Try warming your winter weather with these ideas during the season.

BEGIN WITH A WARM BULLETIN BOARD

Set aside one of your bulletin boards for children to decorate with warm items: mittens, boots, scarves, and jackets. These can be colored, cut out, and hung to show how people keep warm. Add brightly-painted flowers, cut-out candles, and perhaps a rainbow. Don't forget a big yellow sun to shine over all. By the end of the season, your board should be bright and cheerful. Use the board for fun activities. How many mittens can children find? Are there more scarves or jackets? How many different colors do you see? Create a story using five or six items on the board. Have fun using your board in many different ways.

WARM WITH LIGHT

❄ Add a fireplace to your reading corner for a warm, cozy storytime and circletime. Draw a fireplace on a large sheet of paper for children to color. Tape this to the wall by your reading area and enjoy the "warmth."

❄ Make Eskimo lights by threading string through a hole punched into a cork. Leave one inch of string at each end. Fill an 8" by 10" baking dish half full of water. Slowly pour 1/4" cooking oil on top of the water. Carefully place corks on top of the oil being careful not to get any oil on the string wick. ADULT ONLY: light wicks with a match (use caution around flames). The oil is absorbed into the string and will burn like a candle. While you watch the lights, read a book about the people who live in the Arctic region and depend on "candles" similar to these for light during long dark winters.

❄ Play a flashlight game. Place objects such as a cup, paint jar, block, and ball in a row near a wall. Turn off the light. (Make sure it is not completely dark.) Ask children to sit across the room from the objects. Give one child a flashlight and name an object. The child find the object and shines the light directly on it while other children count to five. This is good for eye-hand coordination.

❄ Another fun game to try is "find what I say." Invite children to sit in a circle. Ask one child to name an object in the room. Ask another to find it with the flashlight.

LOOK FOR A WEATHER BREAK

Take advantage of those times when you can be outside for a little while. Dress warmly and take a snow walk. Look for footprints and make some of your own. Make snow people, snow angels and snow animals. Have fun creating original animals. Give them silly names. For another game, take a stick and make a large circle in the snow. Toss snowballs inside the circle.

If you are in rain country, watch for a misty day of gently falling rain and take a rain walk. Be sure everyone has rain boots on. Jump over puddles, walk around puddles, find dripping rain spouts, and look for spider webs covered with raindrops. Look up. If the sun peeks through the clouds, you might see a rainbow!

BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

If you can't get outside, bring the outdoor activities in to remind you of warm summer days and develop gross motor skills, too. Walk the balance beam, jump over it, jump off and jump onto the beam. Lay rope on the floor and be "tight rope walkers." Roll balls back and forth on the floor, play ring toss and jump in and out of masking tape circles. Use nap pads or tumbling mats to crawl over like snakes using only bodies to move. Try somersaults and make tunnels by arching backs on the mats.

WINTER WARMERS

Enjoy a slice of summer by holding a campout in your room. Perhaps you can borrow a tent or use a sheet to lay across a table and drop down on the sides to the floor. Make a campfire with blocks. For a realistic look, place red cellophane over a lighted flashlight in the center for the "fire." No camp time would be complete without "somemores." To make yours, place miniature marshmallows (let children count them) on a graham cracker square, place a small piece of chocolate on top of the marshmallows and top with another cracker. Darken the room, sit around the campfire and sing songs and tell stories. Ask children to join you in creating new stories.

If your tent seems a bit chilly, warm up with some Stone Soup. First read the story, then ask each child to bring one vegetable for the soup pot. Simmer on a hot plate or stove and enjoy.

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

Plan a winter festival. The celebration might last for a day or all week long. Use chart paper and plan activities with children. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Cut out snowflakes, color them, and hang from the ceiling.
- Make bright-colored paper chains to decorate your room.
- Create an ice cube structure by using ice cubes in place of blocks.
- Create face masks of animals that live in the snow (penguins, polar bears, reindeer).

Have an animal parade and discuss why some animals hibernate or migrate.

- The grand finale: make ice cream using either a hand or electric ice cream maker. Provide several toppings for children to try.

When winter blues have you and your children feeling weary, brighten your day with a "warm idea. Sing Ella Jenkin's "You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song." Sing all the verses and add some of your own. As you warm the wintry weather, your winter seasons may not be quite the same again.

SOME BOOKS TO READ

- *Wee Sing Around the Campfire* By Pamela Conn Beall and Susan Hagen Nipps (Price, Stern, Sloan)
- *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown (Aladdin Books)
- *You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song* by Ella Jenkins (Folkways Records)

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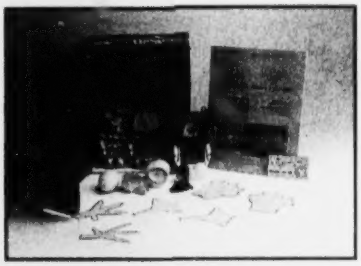

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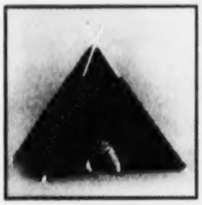

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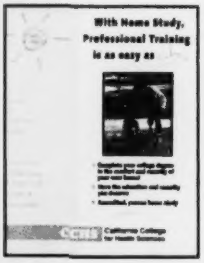

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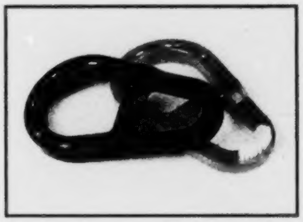

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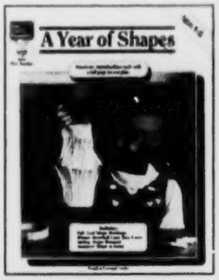

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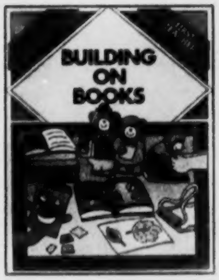

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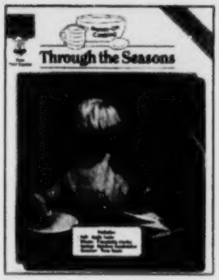

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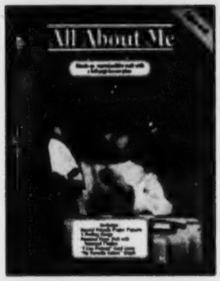

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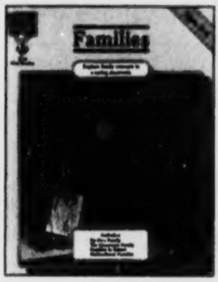

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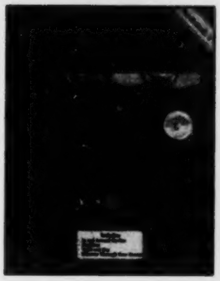

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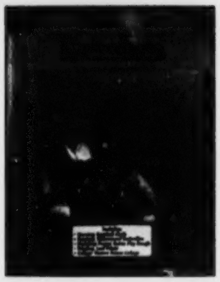

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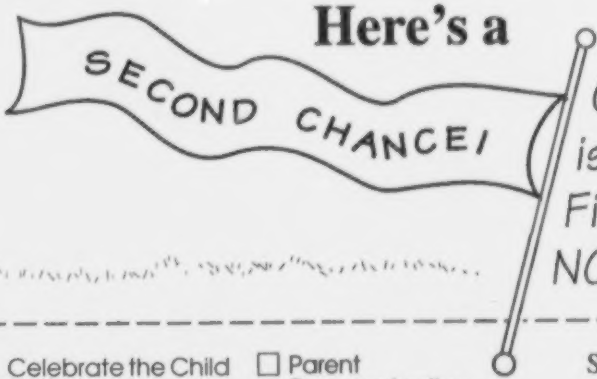
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Vol. 18 No. 2

For People Who Care for Young Children

March/April 1997

Having Fun Around the World Page 19

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- Make Multicultural Prop Boxes
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Leanne Grace

A "global adventure? For young children it's as close as your classroom. Introduce "multiculturalism" in a developmentally appropriate way. Begin with the children, themselves.

By beginning your global explorations with your children, activities focus on likenesses and differences, learning to get along with others, and feeling good about themselves. Next, survey families for background and ethnic origins. With the information provided, families can be asked to share traditions, customs, foods, music, language and artifacts. Ways that families are the same and different could be explored and celebrated.

Look next to your child care facility and staff for multicultural resources and inspiration. Staff members can share themselves with children. Pictures of their families, holidays, and traditions are another planning source. Encourage staff to bring in multicultural objects for children to see, feel, and hear.

Community issues also serve as springboards to planning. The opening of an Asian restaurant is an example of issues where lesson plans could help create an awareness of something new and different.

This issue of *First Teacher* will help you weave multicultural themes and adventures throughout your curriculum all year long. Bring ideas from other cultures into your games, music and movement, art, and language development, dramatic play, and more—always starting with children's interests and cultures with which they are familiar.

Reexamine the images on your classroom walls. Try an "I Love You" Quilt as described by Jeannine Perez in her article.

Reach out to the world through storytime. Whenever possible, use books with real photos of people doing everyday tasks. In this way, children can make connections that "others" are more like us than different. In this issue, you will find suggestions for picture books about other cultures, books about toys in many cultures, stories about animals around the world, and folk tales from many lands that will delight your children.

By beginning your "global adventures" with the children and families in your care, you will be on the road to wonderful experiences that can take your children to the places they need to know best—themselves and their families. Then they will feel comfortable to travel beyond the safety of the familiar into the wide world of different—and fascinating—people and places.

WELCOME!

Duncan John
Bispham

8 lbs. 9 1/2 oz.
December 10, 1996

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Susan Peterson is the assistant director for the Center of Academic Excellence at the University of Central Arkansas. Her work includes providing inservice training to the teachers in the Arkansas Public Schools. Her interests include Family Literacy and Language Arts.

UPCOMING THEMES FOR *FIRST TEACHER*

May/June	A Happy, Healthy Spring
July/August	Messy Learning
September/ October	Organize Your Classroom
November/ December	Families and Friends

PHOTO CREDITS

Peter Lewin: cover, 7, 14, 15, 25

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Janet McDonnell: page 10, 22, 23

Catherine Minor: pages 12, 13, 18, 33, 35

Nina Woldin: pages 4, 11, 28, 29

HELPFUL HINTS

FROM "SHALOM" TO "JAMBO"

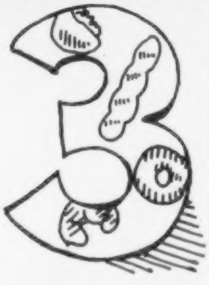
by Gail P. Jones

שָׁלוֹם
Hello!
Bon jour

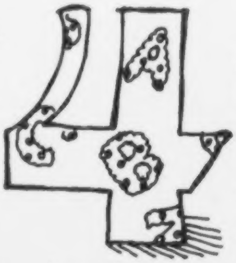
You can do multicultural learning activities throughout the year with a little planning. Beginning with morning circle, you might choose to greet children with *"Hello"* or English greetings in September and change to a different language for each month. *"Buenos Dias"* for October; *"Bon Jour"* for November; *"Shalom"* for December; *"Jambo"* for January; *"Huan Ying"* for February; *"Guten Tag"* for March; *"Ohio"* for April; *"G'day Mate"* for May; *"Goed Dag"* for June.

II
3
4
five
VI
eight
9
X

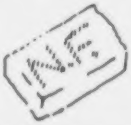
For indoor large motor activities, why not choose games from other countries for variety as well as learning about some of the origins for our traditional games. Ring Around the Rosie and London Bridges are played all the time, but few children realize that these games come from England or where this country is located on the globe. Play hopscotch with numbers from different countries.



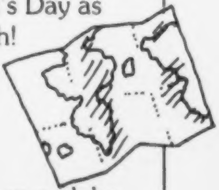
Snacktime and lunch are also great opportunities for introducing food names from other countries. With just breads, it won't take long to see a croissant, bagel, pita bread, or breadstick! Encourage parents to purposely put ethnic foods in lunches for just this reason!

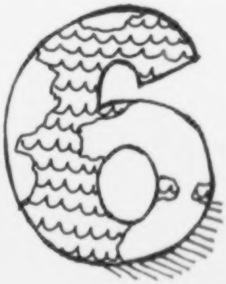


If children are learning their initials, why not let them make *"klasses,"* sweet cakes from Belgium with their initials on them. Or, perhaps children might like to make letter pretzels with a German recipe! Transitions can be fun and a challenge by using foreign languages. For example, you might say *"cinco muchachos"* tapping five boys as you say it ... or children wearing *"rojo"* (red) may line up next.

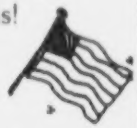


You can also use multicultural recipes for making party foods throughout the year. Latkas would make a great potato snack for St. Patrick's Day as well as for Hanukkah!





Keep a globe nearby as well as a flat map of the world for quick reference. Use it daily to help children realize they are part of a greater place. If Jenny has on a Scotch plaid, show them where Scotland is!



If you keep a chart of international flags on the wall, you can help children learn colors and eventually identify some of the flags for specific countries. They love to recreate flags in the art center as well.

TODDLER TIME

RHYTHM AROUND THE GLOBE

by Jeannine Perez

Watch any toddler in your classroom for an hour or so. Try to see life through the eyes of a two year old as you watch your toddlers sing and sway and clap and wiggle with their endless energy and enthusiasm.

To young children, the world is a wonderful place that is crammed with songs and dances. Toddlers relate to their world through all five senses and then respond to it joyfully through their own movements and sounds. Dancing and singing are as natural to young children as eating and sleeping and are a part of their joyful response to life. We cannot help but smile as we watch their exuberance, but do we also realize that their impromptu or group musical activities promote learning?

Even newborn babies listen to and are fascinated by music. Toddlers are more apt to move to songs than to sing all the lyrics, and they love songs that include actions. Young children usually do not sing every word, but join in with words or phrases and actions.

To include more rhythmic breaks in your group times, you might share some of the activities that follow in your own circle times. Circles are the oldest of space forms, and sitting or standing in a circle helps each child feel a part of the group, allows children to observe what everyone else does, and presents a closure and sense of closeness that encourages participation instead of merely being a spectator.

- Use singing games, drama, and creative games that contain strong rhythm patterns. Many favorite songs such as "Old MacDonald," "Who Stole the Cookie"? and "If You're Happy and You Know It," have repetitive phrases and encourage clapping, clicking, stamping, rubbing, knocking, slapping, using body sounds, and self sounds while enjoying familiar songs.
- Talk to your children in rhythm. Make the words a cadence as you ask children, *"What did you eat for breakfast today?"* Or you might ask the same question and help children clap or tap out the answer. *"What...did...you...eat...for... break...fast...to...day?" "Pancakes and sausage for breakfast today." "Cornflakes and toast for breakfast today."*
- Sing "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" with variations in tempo and intensity. Help children do the actions suggested in the song at the same speed you sing the words, or match the actions to the intensity of the music. *"This is the way we sweep the floor...," "...rock the baby...,"* or *"...run for the bus...."*
- Act out stories and songs, making each musical experience a game. Read a favorite animal story like *The Little Red Hen.* Then hold up pictures of different animals, and move with children in a variety of positions and to different tempos. Say, *"Let's be sad cats." "Now we can all be happy dogs." "How do you think a surprised chicken moves?" "What about a frightened sheep?"* Then make movement a personal reaction. *"Show me how you jump out of bed each morning." "What do you do when you feel lonely?" "How do you put your shoes on when you are in a hurry?"*
- Use imagination. Ask children to follow you as you make a Leprechaun parade around the room. (Green paper cone hats set the mood.) Remind them that they must do whatever you do. Move around the room in different tempos, making the activity a game like Follow the Leader. Look for rainbows in a swamp. March around the room with your knees high, and then skip lightly over puddles.

Walk slowly and heavily, stepping over trees in the forest like a giant, and then fly quickly over the clouds as delicately as a fairy butterfly. Ride a white horse. Trot and then gallop. You can make up your own beat for this activity, use a drum, or move with children to a record.

- Listening and imitating is often as important as performing. Ask all of your children to sit very quietly and listen for a sound that they can make with their bodies on furniture. Then go around the circle and ask each child to make their own sound. Talk about the different kinds of sounds you hear; shaking, tapping or knocking, scratching and scraping. If you're brave, you might conduct your children and their sounds as an impromptu orchestra. Be sure to establish signals for starting and stopping before beginning your concert.
- Create your own dance march, using instruments from the kitchen. Tap and beat time with plastic ladles, or spoons pounded on pans, clang lids together, jingle measuring spoon sets, and shake plastic containers with a few beans inside (Be sure that the lids are screwed on tightly).
- Give each child a paper sack and see how many kinds of sounds they can make from the paper (try blowing them up and popping them, crumpling and scraping, tearing, cutting, patting or slapping the sacks on the floor, etc.).
- Use familiar words to reinforce the concept of rhythm and show that words and language always have a beat and rhythm. Clap while giving directions for transition times or clap to each child's name. Vary your movement by patting your thighs or stamping your feet. Sit on the floor and pat the floor in a simple rhythm, to each child's name, the days of the week, or be silly by clapping out the names of your snack or lunch foods. (*peanut butter and jelly*) Vary your movements. Dance, march, tap a beat, and remind children to move freely but always without touching each other.
- Make up your own dialogue to familiar tunes. We wrote these words to sing and to the tune of "*Are You Sleeping* "?

The wind is blowing.
The wind is blowing.
Through the trees,
through the trees.
Hold your hat on tight,
or it will blow right out of sight,
Feel the breeze.
Feel the breeze.

(There are lots of cues for movement and drama in simple songs.)

Music is like a key that opens doors to creative and original experiences. Whenever you sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star " or "If You're Happy and You Know It" with your children, you are helping them understand patterns, express their ideas and feelings, and develop their emotional and language skills.

GLOBAL LEARNING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

by Karen Stephens

Making sure activities and subjects of study are presented in a developmentally appropriate manner should be the guiding principle in your classroom. No matter what curriculum topic you explore with children, there are ways they learn best.

By matching activities to children's natural learning styles and developmental abilities, we can help children continue to love learning about their world. There are strategies for teaching children that work WITH their natural style of learning, rather than working AGAINST it. Those strategies are embodied in the principles of developmentally appropriate practice. When activities are presented to allow children to explore their world in the way that their inborn curiosity and natural, preferred learning style permits, exciting learning takes place. Here are some keys to developmentally appropriate practice in multicultural education.

- **Develop topics of investigation that relate to children's expressed interests.** Are they interested in vehicles? In your explorations, include transportation modes from around the world.
- **Gear your activities according to individual children's age and developmental abilities.** Make sure your teaching style, the specifics of information you share, and the nature of experiences you offer are not too far above children's abilities.

Likewise, make sure you teach and guide children's learning so they are not bored. Knowledge and experiences should garner children's attention; they should actively engage their concentration and curiosity. If teachers fail to succeed in this, the result will be seen in children's boredom and a poor attitude towards classroom learning and participation.

- **Select learning experiences that convey information worth knowing for children in the early childhood years.** The best rule or thumb is that if information relates to **real daily experiences** children might share, it is knowledge worth knowing and pursuing.
- **Set the classroom "stage" so children can learn the way they learn best—through playful, hands-on activities, manipulation, and exploration.** By introducing daily practices of peoples around the world, we can help children respect others and understand that around the world, people really are more alike than different.
- **Make sure all your experiences are authentic, accurately updated, and non-biased.** Stereotypes in terms of habits, beliefs, language, traditions, or lifestyle should not by perpetuated. For instance, not all Native American people live or lived in teepees. In addition, most people in tribes, who did live in teepees in the past, no longer do so today. It is important not only to present information on how cultures once lived, but also to illustrate how they continue to live and their everyday lifestyles in the present.

Following are tips to make the multicultural learning process interesting, meaningful, and authentic to children's lives, as well as appropriate to their natural style of learning.

- Explore practices that are part of EVERY child's family and community life, no matter where they live. This will make it knowledge meaningful for young children.

For instance, we all live in groups called families and communities; we all need and create shelter; we all express love and sorrow in unique ways; we all have the need to express ourselves through dress, music, and the arts. How each of us fulfills those needs is an exciting topic for multicultural study.

- Take advantage of teachable moments. Pick up on children's expressed interests in how others live. Listen for interests as they play.

The most relevant time to talk about other cultures is when a child, or children, in your program are directly impacted. For instance, is one of your families from a specific culture or another country? If so, invite them into the classroom to share their uniqueness. Take time to help these parents understand what cultural things would be most appropriate to share with your class.

- Introduce other cultures in the classroom through "hands-on" learning. Emphasize active participation with peers. When introducing cultures, engage children in the culture's art processes, style of musical expression through playing of instruments and dance, foods by cooking according to different cultural traditions.
- Use field trips to help children see how many cultures improve the quality and diversity of community life. Visit ethnic food marts, restaurants, museums, schools, apparel stores, and houses of worship. And be sure to visit stores that employ diverse staff; this helps children see that we all contribute to each other.
- Subtly expose children to multicultural experiences by designing your classroom environment. For instance, hang posters of different world habitats in the science center. In the block center, hang posters of buildings from the world over. (Travel agencies and libraries are great resources for posters.)

Display books that reflect ALL people of the world in your library corner. Make sure your music center, including compact discs, records, and rhythm instruments reflects the diversity of the world's musical expression. (Children should be able to enjoy Irish folk music whenever they choose, not only on St. Patrick's Day.)

- Make sure your meal menus regularly include foods prepared in many different ways. Allow children to help prepare meals through cooking activities.
- Build a bridge between school and home learning. Involve all parents in sharing their culture during family night. For instance, you might have a potluck featuring ways people around the world use rice or different styles of breads.

Have parents conduct classroom sing-alongs sharing traditional-cultural songs. Ask a brave parent to serve as a cultural storyteller for the group. Have a parent teach everyone a dance from their native culture.

In your classroom newsletter, encourage parents to submit information about upcoming cultural events, such as community concerts and art exhibitions. Ask parents to share nutritious cultural recipes for publication in your newsletter.

Notify parents of community multicultural workshops available for children and families, for instance, art workshops for making masks using styles from around the world or ethnic cooking classes. Include cultural education when devising your family lending library. Make sure theresource books represent different cultures.

Use your experience, training, and imagination to think of other authentic ways to introduce children to the magical diversity of our world's population. Enjoy your adventures!

HELPFUL BOOKS

- *Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs* by Stacey York (Redleaf Press)
- *Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Children* by Louise-Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force, (NAEYC)
- *Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity with Young Children* by Bonnie Neugebauer (NAEYC)

MOVING ALONG —ON YOUR FEET!

by Margery A. Kranyik

"Are you ready? Let's go! We've got the beat and we've got it in our feet. We're in the groove and our feet are on the move!"

Chant with children as you gather them for circle or group time. Ask them to look at their feet—with or without shoes. *"Let's see you wiggle your toes. Can you make circles in the air with your feet? Can you move your feet side to side and up and down?"* Show pictures of feet on the move—playing sports or walking. Discuss with children how feet are our most basic means of getting from place to place...our special mode of transportation.

Explore foot motion words—*walk, run, hop, jump, slide, gallop*. Have children demonstrate to ensure that everyone knows what each word means. Have them move in a circle as they sing this song and follow the directions .

(Tune: "Mulberry Bush")

This is the way we walk our feet,
Walk our feet,
Walk our feet.
This is the way we walk our feet
As we move along.

Add new verses with *skip, hop, jump, run*, and other words that children might suggest. Dig out your rhythm instruments and have children find some that sound like *jump, walk, run, glide*, etc. Have them accompany the motions with the instruments.

If a child in your group is confined to a wheel chair or scooter, add direction words for moving— this is the way we move ahead, or move on back, circle around. Ask assistance from their aide or from a child helper.

Try another song: (Tune: "Wheels on the Bus")

The feet on the floor go
Walk, walk, walk.
Walk walk walk.
Walk, walk, walk.
The feet on the floor go
walk, walk, walk
All throughout the day.

Substitute other foot motion words and move around in a circle.

Explore how animals get from place to place. Key words: *walk, fly, jump, crawl, slither.* Use "Mulberry Bush" substituting *"elephants walk," "snakes slither," "lizards crawl," "big birds fly," "kangaroos jump."* Make up your own song.

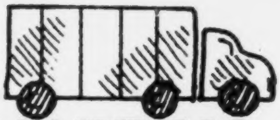
Encourage children who do not have the use of their legs to express themselves with upper torso motions to illustrate *hop, crawl,* and *swim*. If in doubt as to how to provide for children who are physically challenged, consult with your local inclusion or intervention specialist.

A variety of composed songs describe modes of transportation that are unique. Seek out and tape these "oldies, but goodies" and you will have a lasting collection of travel songs for your transportation theme. Suggestions include:

- "Leavin' on a Jet Plane" and "Take Me for a Ride in a Car, Car" by Peter, Paul and Mary
- "Yellow Submarine" by the Beatles
- "Up, Up and Away in My Beautiful Balloon" by the Fifth Dimension

I bet you and your staff can think of others! Remember to visit the recording section of your public library and weekend yard sales for unexpected theme related music.

A PAGE FOR PARENTS
Duplicate and give copies to your families



A ROAD MAP TO MAPPING SKILLS

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

I'll never forget the first time my husband thrust a road map in my direction. We were taking a car trip and I was just settling in with my new novel.

As I struggled folding and unfolding the layers of road map lined with crazy-looking veins and arteries, I was steamed and didn't bother to hide it. Problem was, I never learned how to read a road map. My version of a "road map" was a list of detailed directions sprinkled with plenty of fast food landmarks. (Turn left at Dickie's Donuts, hang a sharp right at McDoogles, and then head straight down until you reach the Pancake Palace.)

Somehow we made it to our destination that day, but tensions ran high the whole trip. Today I am careful to always share maps and globes and atlases with my two young children. Of course, children's understanding of faraway places and distances and how abstract representations (maps, globes, and atlases) represent these locales is limited at best. But I believe it's important to at least familiarize youngsters with these tools so that, when ready, they will regard these resources as old friends. Here, then, are some kid-friendly ways to begin.

- Have maps and globes and atlases on hand and accessible. Refer to them often and "think out loud" so your children can glean how these resources are used. *("Cousin Alma is flying in from Florida next week. She says she's stopping over in South Carolina. I'm going to look that up in our atlas to see the path her plane will take.")*
- Be on the lookout for map-inspired toys to own, such as balls, puzzles, and placemats. Also, all children love owning a real globe.
- When entertaining a visitor from another city or country, pull out the atlas or refer to a globe and look together at the place they call home. This activity can serve as a conversation springboard about the visitor's country and often sparks discussions about surrounding geographic areas, too. *("Yes, I was born in Dublin, but my family often traveled over here to London, too.")*
- Be aware that books and stories offer lots of opportunities to take armchair trips. *("Let's see if we can find the country where Strega Nona comes from.")*
- When planning a family vacation (or a class field trip) pour over a road or street map in order to trace your itinerary together. Jot landmarks directly on the map, if possible, or flag them with tiny removable sticky notes. As you travel, help children keep track of the trip by noting the landmarks as you pass them.
- Check out favorite toys and books to see where they were manufactured and/or published. Locate these places to see how far the merchandise traveled to get to your home.
- Cover a bulletin board with a map most closely representing the places your family has traveled. Press thumbtacks into places you've visited together. Or, use stick-on dots available at office supply shops.

(**Tip:** If your family doesn't do much traveling, try posting a map of your community and flagging those spots you travel to locally.)

- If you're ever lost, don't panic. Instead, refer to a map or atlas. Again, allow children to share in your thought process. This way, they can gain insights into how you rely on these resources to help you solve problems. *("I think I'm supposed to turn here. Let's see. I'm looking for Route 8. Do you see an 8 anywhere on this map? Yep! There it is!")*

In this way, your children will grow up regarding maps as dependable friends who can help get them from here to there.

TR-ANIMALS TRAVEL THE GLOBE!

by Susan Peterson

Many teachers do not have the motivation or the financial means to be world travelers. Yet teachers realize it is important that children have a basic understanding of their world, both locally and globally.

How can teachers introduce the exciting world of travel and impart geographic concepts to children if they and/or their students are unable to do much traveling? Teachers trained as National Geographic teacher consultants have found a way—by adopting stuffed animals as their class travelers!

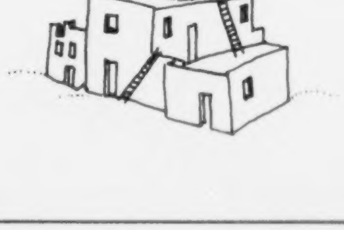
Sherry Bickel's "Robearto" has been to Dallas, Hawaii, and San Francisco. This stuffed teddy from Arkansas has seen Mount St. Helens and the Nova Scotia coastline. His travels and adventures have made geography come alive for the students in her class. And in Diane McCarty's Iowa classroom, children learned about China, Jamaica, Japan, Alaska, and New Zealand through the eyes of their stuffed traveling animals who sent them postcards, pictures, letters, and gifts from around the world.

These teachers, members of a Geographic Alliance, have witnessed their children's interest and knowledge of geography blossom, and you can too, without ever leaving the classroom!

First, you must choose a class "tr-animal" (traveling-animal). This voyager is simply any appropriate stuffed animal or doll. Although bears are very popular, your area may have a special animal association through a local school, university, or business affiliation.

Once the animal is chosen, the next step is to begin an investigation of local contacts who do lots of traveling. During this time, it is good for your "tr-animal" (who by now is cleverly named) to venture out locally. First, be sure to identify your voyager with a name tag and an address, just in case it gets lost. (What better time to have your children memorize their own addresses?) If your class is small, children could take turns taking the "tr-animal" home overnight or during the weekend. Ideally, the child should be making a trip somewhere, to grandma's house or visiting a special place in another city or state. Upon returning the "tr-animal" to school, children should be prepared to share where the animal went, and to tell about any special things the animal may have seen, eaten, or worn. Even shy children can be brave when using a class "tr-animal" as a prop!

Depending on the age group, a chart can be kept indicating who took the "tr-animal," to what locations, on what date. Postcards, maps, and photos can help create an interesting, colorful bulletin board. This bulletin board can



also be used for such follow-up activities as keeping mileage records, making oral summaries, creative writing/drawing activities, or learning basic map skills by placing dots on a map or globe.

After the tr-animal has journeyed locally, it is ready to see the USA—and beyond! By now, parents and area business people have heard of this project, either through a parent newsletter or by having a local news reporter share the story with the whole community. Especially appropriate as potential travel partners are parents and relatives of your students, local business people, or other teachers who enjoy traveling.

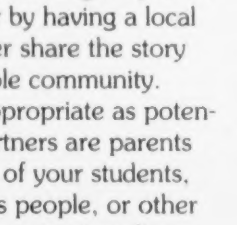
Try to find someone who is making a trip out of the country. They should, if possible, discuss their travel plans and expectations before leaving on their trip. For instance, a trip abroad may involve getting a passport, making travel arrangements (boat or air), eating new foods, packing clothing for a different climate (rain forests, beaches or glaciers), learning about a new currency, and other cultural similarities and differences. After returning, the "tr-animal" and its human escort can give a presentation on their adventures. If the adult traveler is unable to accompany the "tr-animal," a short written journal or diary entry and a small souvenir or trinket will cause excitement and enthusiasm for travel to build. Where are we off to next?

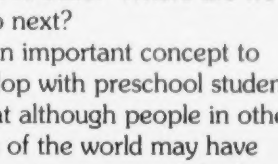
An important concept to develop with preschool students is that although people in other parts of the world may have different customs and do things differently, we all share many common traits (language, food, money, celebrations, customs, and so on).

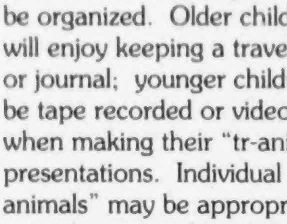
Be sure to keep parents up-to-date on your "tr-animal's" adventures. The typical *"What did you do in school today?"* gets old and very boring. Instead, prompt your parents to say, *"Tell me what your tr-animal said and did while he was in Hawaii. Would you like to go there someday?"* The practice of repeating/retelling an adventure will help to build a child's vocabulary and oral language skills.

Obviously, this project can be adapted in many ways. Send-off and welcome-home parties can be organized. Older children will enjoy keeping a travel diary or journal; younger children can be tape recorded or videotaped when making their "tr-animal" presentations. Individual "tr-animals" may be appropriate if animals are ample and there is a lot of parent of volunteer involvement.

By getting others involved in the world of travel, it is possible to bring a part of the globe to your classroom. Who knows where you and your children may collectively venture? Off we go!







AROUND THE WORLD...IN YOUR CLASS

by Sherry Burrell

Children love to pretend to travel! How easily classroom chairs become airplane seats, a row of large blocks becomes a train, or a large cardboard box is transformed into a ship! Take advantage of children's excitement about traveling, and expose them to some wonderful new experiences! Here is one way to "set the stage," so that the imaginative travel of the children in your class might take on a new "destination."

Around the World in Eighty Days is a story written long ago by Jules Verne. In the story, Phileas Fogg and his friend, Passepartout (which in French means *"goes everywhere"*), travel around the world in a race against time to win a bet. Suspense builds as a Scotland Yard detective named Thaddeus Fix chases the two travelers because he believes they are bank robbers running away from the law. Set in 1872, the pair plan a route and use nearly every form of transportation available to them at that time. They travel through deserts, over mountains and across oceans—from London to Paris, to Saudi Arabia, to India, to China, across the USA, and back to England.

In the story, the characters travel by foot, by train, hot air balloon, camel, sailboat, and even by swimming! Using some of the basic elements of the story, plan a trip around the world for your class. Imagine the opportunities for learning.

First, re-tell Jules Verne's story in a very simplified way. It might help if you read the book yourself, but it isn't necessary. Just "wing it" using the few details provided here. Next, invite children to go on their own trip around the world. As a title for your unit, use the number of days your class will be studying this topic. For example, one class might decide to have "Around the World in Four Weeks" as a theme.

To get started, have children look at a globe and choose a pathway around it. Help children choose several places on their way around the world where they might stop to visit for a short time. Next, help children notice what kinds of land forms they will have to travel across in order to reach each stopping point (or destination).

Using a long piece of butcher paper, help children plan their trip! Guide a discussion of which kinds of transportation might be needed to traverse different kinds of land forms. Provide books and pictures to

encourage children to imagine many different forms of transportation from which to choose. Encourage them to choose a different kind of transportation for each leg of the trip. There is no need to be sensible on this trip!

Plan one leg of the journey at a time. Spend as little or as much time as you wish on each one. If the first part of the trip is from the USA to France, children must choose a type of transportation that will get them across the ocean. One class might decide to travel by airplane, but another might choose a cruise ship, a sailboat, or even a submarine. Once planned, set children to work creating the desired mode of transportation. Solicit information, photos, or models from parents and community resources to help children picture how it might look. Provide boxes, blocks, blankets, cardboard strips, colored construction paper, large stuffed animals, and classroom furniture. Remember that a child's imagination can turn the simplest of materials into something wonderful! Often, it's the adults who have a difficult time "seeing" what children have created.

As each destination is reached, plan to share a snack from that culture to celebrate your arrival. Teach children to say "Hello" in the language of that culture. Enjoy a song, game, craft activity, folk tale, or dance from that culture. Provide some picture books, travel posters, or artifacts to help children learn a little about that location. Listen to music, practice a local custom, cook up a special dish, or offer an art project that will bring the culture to life for your children.

There are many ways to use this project to offer additional learning activities for children:

- Have children practice packing and unpacking suitcases. Provide a pictorial list of items to pack, and provide a box of items from which children must choose. Challenge children to find the correct items and pack them neatly into a small overnight bag.
- Make a pictograph to show what powers each form of transportation children have chosen (manpower, wind, animal's food, fuel, etc.)
- Encourage children to role-play selling tickets, purchasing tickets, being the "driver," and acting out any other roles they can think of that might accompany each mode of transportation.

Around the World in Eighty Days may not be a story that is appropriate to read to young children (it is very long); but when used in a story-telling format, it can become an exciting "vehicle" to encourage children to explore new places. Using its basic theme of imagining various forms of transportation to help travel around the world, teachers can expose children to many different cultures and land forms as well! Bon Voyage!

MANY WAYS TO SAY: "I LOVE YOU."

by Jeannine Perez

Love is a positive universal trait in a diverse world where people don't always agree. You can make a creative quilt of love to spread goodwill, warm up your center, and act as a springboard to multicultural learning.

A LOVE QUILT

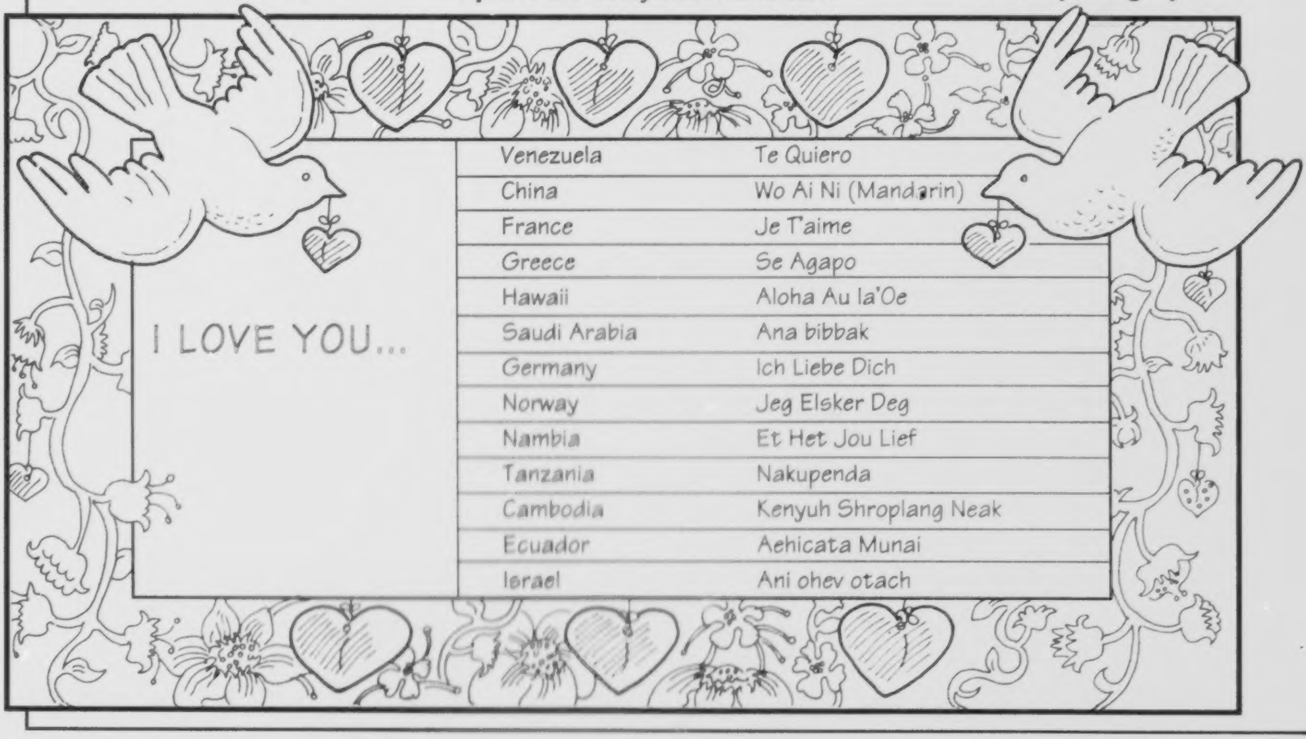
This popular bulletin board originally began with a colorful calendar. The red and white calendar had *"I Love You,"* written in twenty-four languages, with wonderful logos and symbols for each country. We glued the words and logos onto white blocks and then children drew pictures, after hearing stories and learning some things about each country portrayed.

When the quilt squares were complete, we backed them with larger squares of fadeless red paper and laminated them. Laminating is not necessary, but if you do this the multicultural blocks are permanent and can be used for years.

You can display the Love Quilt in many ways. Because each square is an individual eight-inch square, the stack of squares are easily stored and can be arranged in many ways.

You can cover a whole wall with the quilt by alternating the paper squares with wallpaper sample squares cut to the same size. Let each child pick a wallpaper sample, draw on it, and sign their name to it. You can show children how to use a black watercolor marker to make small X's around the border of each wallpaper square, or to outline the edges with broken lines.

Another idea is to cover a bulletin board with burlap that is stretched and stapled tightly.



I LOVE YOU...

Venezuela	Te Quiero
China	Wo Ai Ni (Mandarin)
France	Je T'aime
Greece	Se Agapo
Hawaii	Aloha Au Ia'Oe
Saudi Arabia	Ana bibbak
Germany	Ich Liebe Dich
Norway	Jeg Elsker Deg
Nambia	Et Het Jou Lief
Tanzania	Nakupenda
Cambodia	Kenyuh Shroplang Neak
Ecuador	Aehicata Munai
Israel	Ani ohev otach

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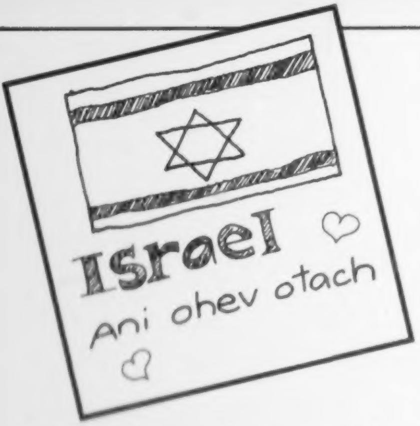
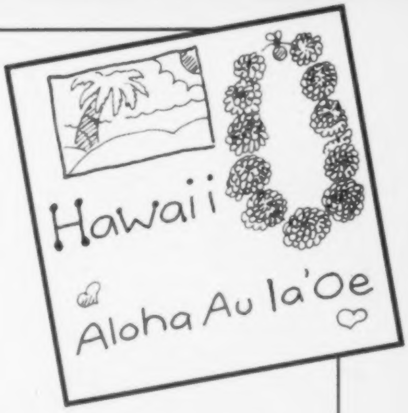




The red squares are arranged and spaced on this background leaving burlap borders for each square. Tie fat bows of yarn and staple the bows between each square. The arrangement still looks like a giant quilt.

Other arrangements include lining up the squares in a sequential line for a border around the room, and using them as story starters to research and find folk tales for that country. You might also surround several world maps with yarns that connect each country to its square.

ACTIVITIES

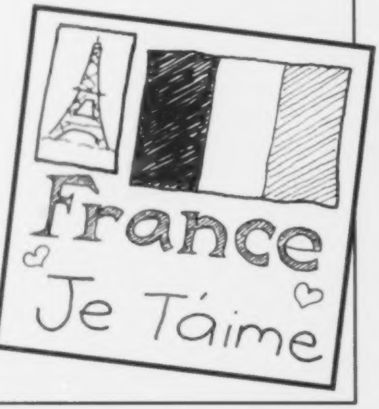
How can you use this wonderful Love Quilt as an interactive resource with children?

- Children like to make their own individual projects to share later at home. Sometimes they create their own booklets using wallpaper covers and with help have painstakingly printed some of the *"I love you"* phrases on the pages. Then they decorate them with their own illustrations.
- Older children take first steps to become familiar with basic research skills by sharing information they've learned. They choose a country and find information on it with the help of an adult parent volunteer, and then share what they have discovered with the rest of us at circletime.
- It's fun to say "I love you" to someone each day in a different language. Sometimes singing it is easier than remembering the words and saying it. Make up songs with some of the phrases, using them with piggyback tunes. Sing *"I love you"* in many other languages to familiar tunes such as "Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star," or "Are You Sleeping?"
- Some countries have become more familiar and personal through the descriptions written by pen pals. Display all pictures and letters on a bulletin board around a map of the country.
- Focus on one country at a time. Start with an empty bulletin board then add a new love quilt square after each reading of a story about that country. To make the occation even more memorable, enjoy a snack adapted from recipes that are typical for that country. (Look through your local library for cookbooks from other countries.) Let children help prepare the food. Later you might compile the collection of recipes into a booklet and give copies to parents as holiday or end-of-the-year presents.

The goals for these projects and activities are simple, but the concept is a large one with a philosophy that is important in our ever-shrinking world. Although the projects are not intensive studies of different cultures, any activity that increases knowledge of neighbors and friends in other countries has far reaching consequences. Awareness and understanding of others must begin early in life.

These projects are eye-catching and children take pride in showing and sharing them with their parents. Their involvement strengthens communications and connections between the center and parents.

Each child will internalize something different from the activities. This depends on the children's age and prior learning experience. But again the goal is simple. We hope that the seeds of awareness, understanding and curiosity about others are planted here and bloom later with a greater understanding of others on this small planet called Earth.



CREATE A GLOBAL VILLAGE

by Karin Leigh Spicer

It is important for young learners to experience different cultures and make comparisons. These comparisons should show and celebrate differences as opposed to comparisons that bring up likes and dislikes. It is not uncommon to hear young learners say, *"I don't like it,"* when they have yet to try something new. Creating a global village in your classroom is one way to let children experience different cultures.

Creating a global village can be done in several ways. First, individuals from different cultures can visit the classroom throughout the school year. Second, two or three global visitors could set up booths for children to visit. Third, a global market could be set up with numerous booths for an entire day with both children and their families participating. Select the situation that would best fit your own classroom environment.

To find global visitors, first try the families of your children and people you know in the community. For other names of individuals willing to participate in your global village, contact your local ethnic service groups. Their group's names and addresses can be found in your local library.

Each global visitor should present the same material allowing children to discuss the similarities and/or differences. For example, each visitor could teach the same word (s) (for example: greetings, numbers, colors, or games. Children could sample food (for example: breads, fruits, or drinks) or try on native clothing. Allow time for each global visitor to tell a story from her culture. A global visitor could show slides or pictures of her country and discuss the terrain and weather. Display a world map or globe so global visitors can place a marker on their country. When possible, show young learners books, games, toys, and clothing from children of their own age from that culture.

After children have visited with the global visitors, ask them to describe some of the things they did, tasted, or learned. What food was similar to something they already eat? Can they remember how to say, *"Hello"* in German? Chinese? Can they recall a story they listened to or tell how to play a game they played? How is one country's weather different or the same than another country?

Finally, there are also many children's books that you can read to your young learners to give them a broader view of the world. For example, Carolrhoda Books has published a series of books that introduces young learners to a variety of countries (for example, Japan, Africa, China) by counting one through ten. For example, two is *nee* in Japanese and two chopsticks are the traditional Japanese eating utensils. *The Lotus Seed* by Sherry Garland (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) is a story about a Vietnamese family adapting to a different way of life in a new country without losing touch with their cultural heritage. John Agard's *Calypso Alphabet* (Henry Holt) features words indigenous to the Caribbean Islands. For example, *"B for bat and ball. That's cricket. Play the game." I Dream of Peace* , preface by Maurice Sendak (Harper Collins), are the drawings and writings of children from former Yugoslavia. They reveal the hopes and fears of thousands of children in that region.

LET'S PLAY—AROUND THE WORLD

by Barbara Fischer

Take your children on a magical global adventure to join children of the world as they play games, dance, and sing. Have a fun time while discovering interesting aspects of each country that you visit. Globe trotting might be just the thing you need to shake the winter blues and to get ready for spring.

Set the stage for your "great adventure" by purchasing or making a large world map for your bulletin board. Cut out child shapes to place on each country you visit. Your children can learn songs, games and dances along with an introduction to the geography of each country visited.

Where in the world will your travels take you? Let children help you decide what countries to visit. Here are a few interesting places you might consider.

MEXICO

FUN FACT: Most of Mexico is a plateau, a large flat area above the surrounding land. Demonstrate a plateau by placing a large flat rock on a piece of brown construction paper. The rock is the plateau; the paper is the land.

GAMES:

"THE LITTLE BLIND HEN" Have children form a circle. The one chosen to be the hen stands in the middle. The hen pretends to scratch for food.

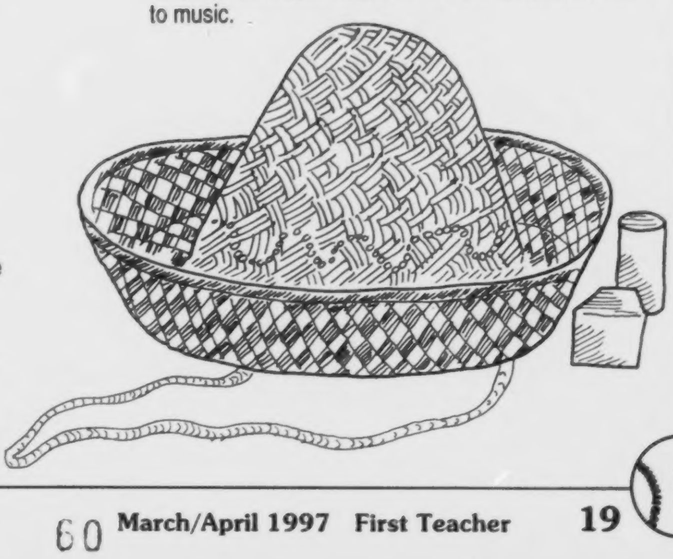
Children: *"What are you doing?"*
Hen: *"Looking for seeds."*
Children: *"For whom?"*
Hen: *"For my children."*
Children: *"Will you give us one?"*
Hen: *"No."*

At the "No," children scatter and run in a circle. The hen tags one child who becomes the next hen.

"THE OLD HAT" Place as many objects (blocks, balls, toys) as there are players around a hat. A sombrero with a wide brim works well. Name an object or color or both (blue car) and ask a child to run to the hat, pick up the named object, and run back to his space. Continue until everyone has a turn. Vary the game by using shapes, numbers, or letters.

SONG AND DANCE:

"THE HAT DANCE" Make musical shakers from decorated paper plates by placing beans inside. Staple plate edges together. Dance around the hat to music.



HAWAII

FUN FACT: The state of Hawaii is a group of islands. An island is land completely surrounded by water. Demonstrate this by placing a rock in a pie pan filled with water.

A Story to Act Out: A grandmother takes children to the water's edge to "chant with the waves". Everyone holds hands at your pretend beach and begins to chant. Children raise their voices (humming sound) as the waves come in. Lower voices as the waves roll out to sea. Quickly raise and lower voices as waves squiggle on the sand. Make loud sounds as waves slap the beach. Make quiet sounds as waves fan out on the beach.

Create a "wave machine" to observe wave action. Fill a plastic pop bottle (a 2-liter bottle works well) with one-third alcohol with blue food coloring and two-thirds paint thinner. Securely tape the cap to the bottle with duct tape. Rock the bottle back and forth to create different wave actions. A teacher should always be present when children are playing with the wave machine.

ECUADOR

FUN FACT: Note the high mountains in this country. Show children how a triangle resembles a mountain by pointing to the wide base and high narrow peak at the top.

GAME: The Bridge at Avengon"

Form a circle with one child in the center. All children chant the following:

On the bridge at Avengon
This is what they do
This is the way the firefighters do (name a subject)
They do like this (imitate an action that firefighters would do)

BOOK: *The Sun, the Wind, and the Rain* by Lisa Westberg Peters (Henry Holt and Co.) This delightful book shows how mountains form. Let children "build " mountains in the sandbox just as Elizabeth does in the book.

ENGLAND

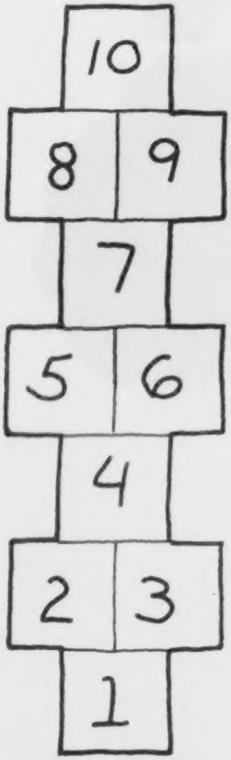
FUN FACT: This island is cool and foggy. Fog is a cloud down at ground level. It is dense and difficult to see through. To demonstrate the dampness found in many parts of England, boil water and watch the steam rise. Hold a cold metal pot filled with ice cubes over the steam. As the water vapor cools, "fog" is formed. This is similar to the warm air from the land meeting the cold air off the ocean in the coastal areas of this country.

GAMES: Many favorite children's games originated here. Here are a few to try.

HOPSCOTCH is a game that spread to many countries. Use chalk to form a simple hopscotch pattern with the numbers from one to ten. Beanbags work well as markers. If children have difficulty hopping, let them try jumping with both feet. For more ideas, try *Hopscotch Around the World* by Mary D. Lankford (Morrow Junior Books). This book offers hopscotch games from seventeen countries.

DARTS is another game from this country. Use foam balls to aim at a pattern drawn on felt. Make the dart board large enough for children to hit easily.

SOCCER is fun to play. Let children just run and try to kick the ball.



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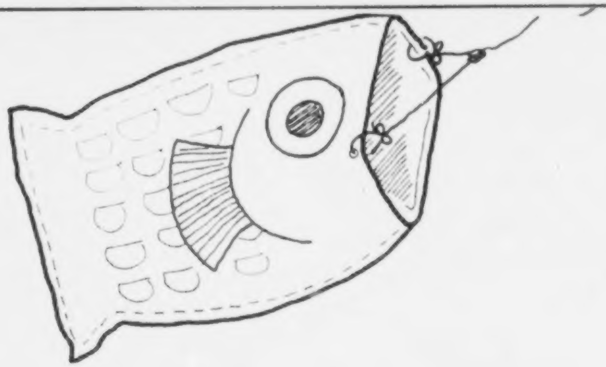


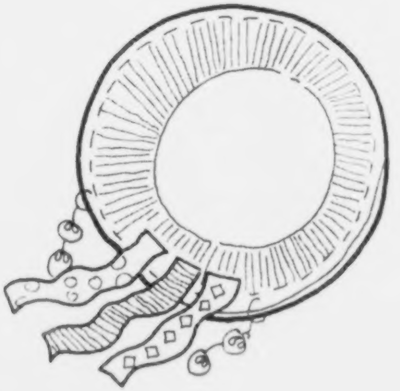
JAPAN

FUN FACT: This country is also an island and has many high mountains. While you review islands, read *The Little Island* by Golden MacDonald (Doubleday).

CRAFTS:

KITES: Japanese children like to make and fly fish shaped kites. The kites shaped like a carp are the most popular. Draw a carp shape on a large sheet of paper for children to watercolor. Cut out the shape and staple two together leaving the mouth open. Attach a string to the head and streamers to the tail. The kite, when pulled into the air, will fill and appear to "swim."

ORIGAMI is a paper folding activity that Japanese children learn to do. With your help they can make a simple paper folded hat to decorate. Small hands need large thin paper rather than the small origami paper. (Try typing paper for these activities) A few more folds and the hat becomes a boat. Decorate your boats to play with or to add to an art project for a three-dimensional effect. Your local library or bookstore will have books on origami instructions.



ITALY

FUN FACT: An interesting fact to discover. This country looks like a boot! It has water on three sides and is known as a peninsula. To demonstrate this, look at your thumb. There is space on three sides. One side is connected to your hand, much like a peninsula.

The Tarantella is a favorite dance in this country. Let's try it: step to the right; then hop; then step to the left and hop with that foot as you swing your right foot in front. Young children may turn hops into jumps and that's fine. Just turn on the music and enjoy dancing!

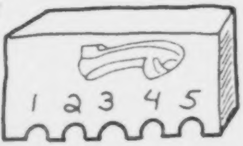
Tambourines: Use ready made ones or make your own by decorating paper plates, adding a few beans, then stapling the plates together. Punch holes two inches apart along the rim , string bells from the holes and add streamers. Let children shake their tambourines as they dance.

GERMANY

FUN FACT: This is a land of many rivers. Show children that a river is a large stream of water on land by slowly pouring water into a trough made of clay dough. Make your own river by patting clay dough flat on a paper plate and making a long "line" through the center with fingers. When dry, paint the line or river blue.

GAME: "Marble Bridge"

Marble Bridge is a game German children like to play. Create a variation of this game by cutting five evenly spaced arches on the open edge of a large shoebox. Turn the box upside down on the floor and place a number above each arch. Call a number for children to roll a marble into that arch. You might want to tape on the numbers so you can change them and increase recognition.



Enjoy your global travels. Give your children an introduction to geography and build global awareness the fun way.

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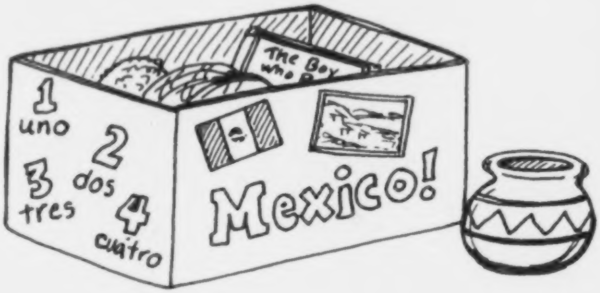


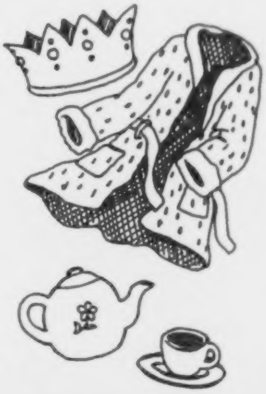
MULTICULTURAL PROP BOXES

by Gail P. Jones

Prop boxes representing a variety of countries or international areas should be a regular part of the classroom so that children can use them whenever a specific country or idea comes up. If the boxes are uniform in size and easily accessible, they become a constant source of learning and cultural awareness. You might start by including boxes for all the ethnic backgrounds of the children in your class. Parents, grandparents, and staff members will probably be able to give you ideas of the kinds of things to include. Local travel agencies and tourist bureaus can give you pictures of the countries and "present-day" inhabitants. This is important so that children do not get the wrong ideas about what the people are like today. (We would not appreciate children in China thinking all Americans wore feathers or deerskin clothes!) If you wish to include some of the pictures of traditional dress and customs, make sure children see pictures of contemporary people as well. You might start with some "dress-ups" that are common to each country as well as a musical instrument, instructions for a simple game that originated in that country or that is played there today. Shoes often are easily acquired as well as hats, shawls, and stuffed animals that may be found in a specific locale. Play foods or recipes for ethnic foods can be included too. There are many books and stories that are folktales from different parts of the world. Simple folktales can be found in *Multicultural Folktales* (Monday Morning Press) and *Teeny Tiny Folktales* (Warren Publishing). If you make them into flannelboard or magnetic stories and tape the words to the box or envelope, they are easy for children to use independently. Include taped music from each area for movement activities. Below and on the next page, you'll find suggestions for prop boxes specific to certain countries or continents that may be helpful.

England

Include a crown, possibly a robe or a palace guard hat or jacket, a tea set, pretend muffins, maypole ribbons on a cardboard tube, and perhaps the story "Lazy Jack." On the outside of the box, words such as *pram* and *napper* might be next to pictures of a baby carriage and diaper.



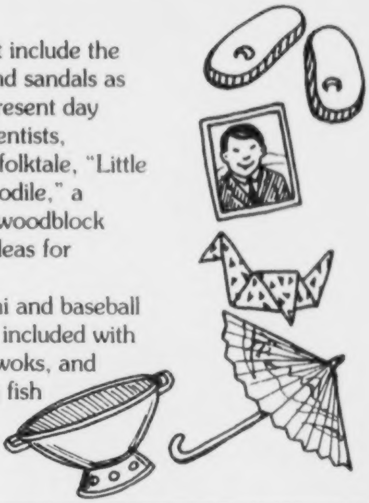
France

Any clothes for a fashion show, berets, chef hats, etc. can be included as well as some famous artist prints of French painters, and pallets with brushes for painting. Perfumes, pretend cheese, french bread or croissants, mustaches and Madeleine books could also be included. Words on the outside of the box might include the numbers one through ten in French, *au revoir*, *merci*, and so on. Include pictures of famous buildings, such as the Eiffel Tower to inspire block creations!

Japan

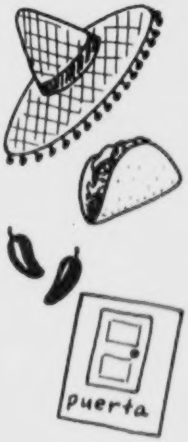
Clothing ideas might include the obi sash, kimono, and sandals as well as pictures of present day businesspersons, scientists, fishermen, etc. The folktale, "Little Bunny and the Crocodile," a Japanese flute, and woodblock prints may also be ideas for inclusion.

Paper for origami and baseball games could also be included with fishing games, play woks, and materials for making fish windsocks.



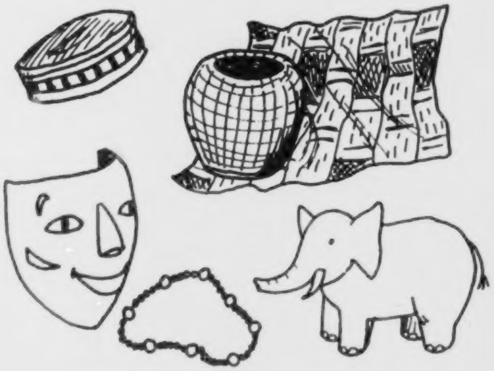
Mexico

Sombreros, serapes, colorful skirts and boots are traditional dress but, again, be sure to show the clothes of all present-day Mexican people in pictures and magazines. You may wish to include some familiar foods such as pretend tacos, fajitas, hot peppers, and tortillas. The story "The Boy Who Breaks Corn Rock" could be included as a flannelboard story. Include clay for pottery making and looms for weaving. Tapes of Mexican music and Spanish words would also be fun additions.



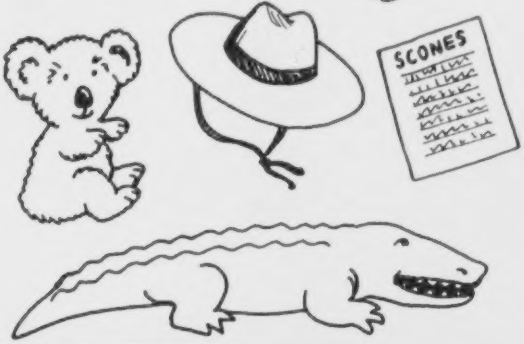
Africa

Include stories such as *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott (Henry Holt & Co.) or *The Elephant's Surprise* by Kate Gleeson (Western Press). An assortment of clothing, sandals, and printed cloth as well as round hats (Kufi) and baskets will lend themselves to role playing. Include jewelry-making materials as well. You might include a Picasso painting to show how he was inspired by African masks in his paintings as well as materials for mask-making and weaving. Animals found in Africa should be included for endless play ideas!



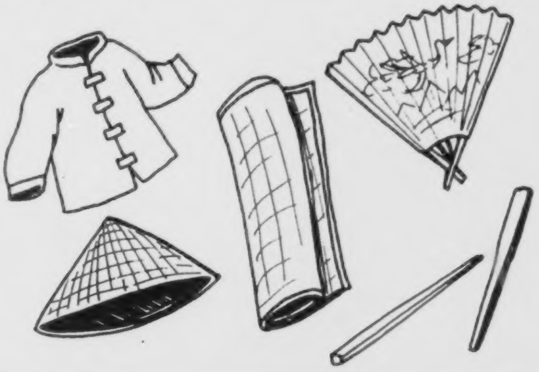
Australia

Traditional hat and shirts, stuffed kangaroos, koala bears, and sheep would be natural inclusions. Perhaps a picture of the Great Barrier Reef and some crocodiles will inspire dramatic play! A recipe for scones and a toy set for the game of cricket may also be appropriate.



China

Shirts with mandarin collars, farmer hats, and silk dresses may be included with modern business clothes. Bamboo mats, calligraphy sets, tangram puzzles, and animals of the Zodiac would also be fun objects to include. Chopsticks and pleated fans have always been a challenge in our pre-K class.



IN THE BOOK CORNER

TRAVEL WITH PICTURE BOOKS

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

Globe trot with children through these picture books set in different countries.

WORLD WIDE TRAVEL

In *This Is the Way We Eat Our Lunch* (Scholastic), author Edith Baer relates in smooth rhyme what children in countries around the world eat for lunch. As youngsters journey from the United States to Canada, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Ghana, Israel, India, Japan, and Australia, they will see children eating foods particular to each region. For example, Pablo eats fried plantains in Puerto Rico and couscous is eaten in Morocco. Delightful, fluid watercolor illustrations give a flavor of each area. The book concludes with a map pinpointing where each child lives, several recipes, and explanations of what the various foods are.

Author Marjorie Priceman also takes children on a world tour in her delightful, original, and clever book *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World* (Alfred A. Knopf). A young girl wants to make an apple pie, but the market is closed. Instead she travels by cruise ship, train, airplane, and bus to a variety of countries where she secures her ingredients. During the girl's travels, children get a sense of what the countries look like and foods indigenous to them. From Italy to France, Sri Lanka, England, Jamaica, and Vermont, the girl gathers wheat, cinnamon, sugar cane, and apples. At home, she processes the ingredients, makes an apple pie, and invites her friends to join her in eating it.

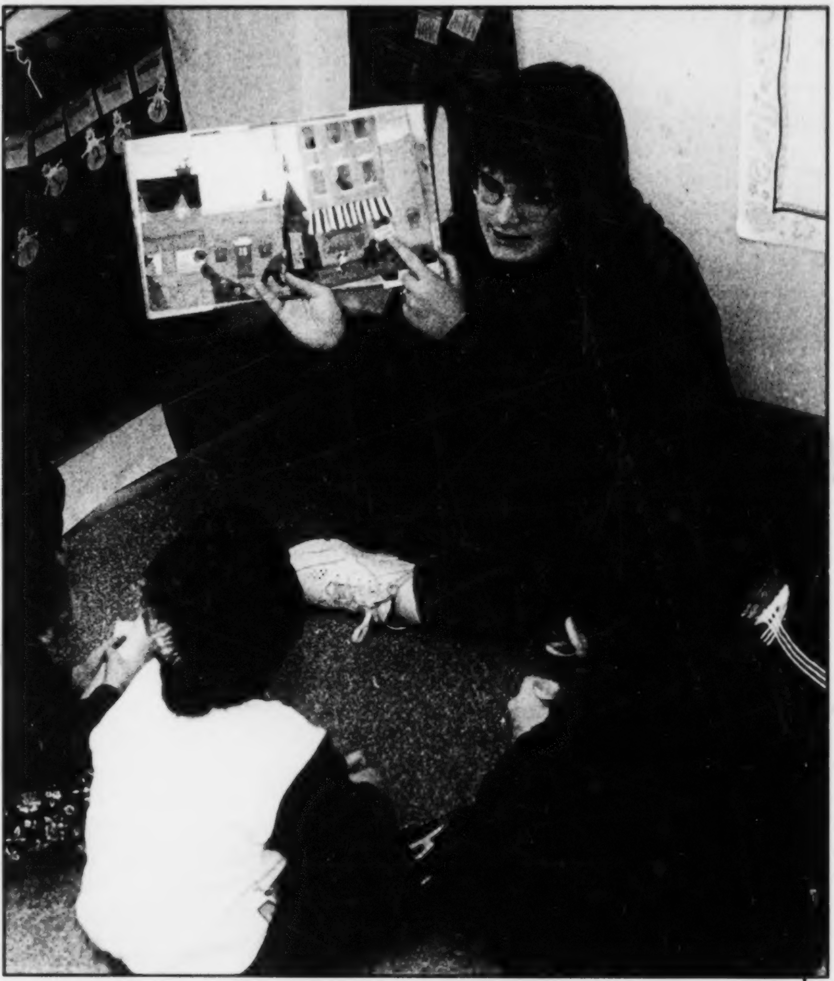
EUROPE

Children enjoy the excitement of a county fair in Ireland in *Market Day* by Eve Bunting (HarperCollins). Through the lively cadence of the text and the rich, detailed illustrations, youngsters feel like Tell and Wee Boy as they experience the hustle and bustle, and the sights and sounds of the fair. See Balba Ali, the sword swallower, and pigs, chicken, and sheep for sale. Taste the sweet clover honey eaten off waxy honeycombs. Notice the typical Irish village with houses close together and stone bridges.

World traveler Mr. Satie and his friend Ffortusque Ffollet, Esq. have an incredible adventure in Paris in *Bonjour, Mr. Satie* by Tomie dePaola (G.P. Putnam's Sons) . Mr. Satie's friend, the artist Pablo, is showing his paintings at Gertrude's Salon when another painter, Henri, arrives to display his artwork. When everyone argues about whose work is better, it's determined that Mr. Satie will judge the paintings. His decision satisfies everyone.

Little Toot and the Loch Ness Monster by Hardie Gamatky (Putnam) reacquaints children with Little Toot, the tugboat. Little Toot dreams of an enormous monster. When Grandfather Toot tells of a monster that lives in Loch Ness in Scotland, Little Toot, fearful but determined, goes to Loch Ness. There he meets the friendly monster Nessie and saves him from capture by unfriendly search boats.

Detailed, soft watercolors compliment *The Big Concrete Lorry* by Shirley Hughes (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). Meet the Patterson family who live on Trotter Street in England. Their home is crowded so they decide to add a room. Children will enjoy watching the development of the "extension." They'll gasp when the cement is delivered before Father wakes up and wonder if it can be poured in time before it dries. While enjoying this story, youngsters will learn some British terms and see how many British houses boast little gardens and have walls that adjoin the walls of the houses to either side.



AFRICA

Sam is upset when his balloon whooshes out the door and floats toward the mountains in *A Balloon for Granddad* by Nigel Gray (Orchard Books). Sam's father consoles him by describing the trip the balloon is probably taking to Grandad Abdulla who lives on an island in North Africa. The balloon does travel over mountain, sea, and desert threatened by birds, and finally floats to Grandad who knows the balloon has traveled from Sam.

The Day of Ahmed's Secret by Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliand (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) is a touching tale with rich detailed paintings that capture the old and new features of Cairo, Egypt. Young Ahmed has a secret that he can barely contain, but he must wait to tell his family because he has work to do. Ahmed travels around Cairo to deliver butane gas canisters to people. While children enjoy viewing the sights of Cairo, they'll sense Ahmed's desire to reveal his secret to his family: Ahmed can write his name.

Introduce children to Ashraf who lives in Cape Town, South Africa in *Somewhere in Africa* by Ingrid Mennen and Niki Daly (Dutton Children's Books). Ashraf loves the busy city. He likes to zigzag down alleys and look at incredible sights (for example, a stool with elephant toes) in shop windows. Ashraf enjoys the song of the fruit seller and the sound of horns, marimbas, and drumming. Vibrant paintings give children a visual sense of Cape Town.

Doctor DeSoto, world-famous mouse dentist, is summoned to Dabwan, West Africa in *Doctor DeSoto Goes to Africa* (Harper Collins) by William Steig. DeSoto must fix a rotten molar for Mudambo, the elephant. Before he can finish the job, Doctor DeSoto is kidnapped by a monkey who has a grudge against Mudambo. DeSoto frees himself, is rescued, and fixes Mudambo's molar.

AUSTRALIA

Take children to the Australian bush in *Pussum Magic* by Mem Fox (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). Meet two possums, Hush and Grandma Poss. Grandma does magic; she makes Hush invisible and this allows him to enjoy many adventures. One day when Hush asks to be visible again, Grandma Poss remembers only that a certain people food is needed for the spell. Hush and Grandma Poss travel to many Australian cities where Hush eats a variety of foods from mornay to Anzac biscuits and pavlova until he's visible again. This delightful book includes a glossary of Australian terms and a map marking the cities visited.

STILL IN THE

BOOK CORNER

AN ANIMAL BOOK SAFARI

by Barbara F. Backer

Young children love animals. From the North Pole to the South Pole, to all the continents and seas in between, the earth is populated by animals. Embark on a global adventure using books to introduce your children to the diversity of animals around the globe.

FOLKTALES

Animals are favorite characters in folktales and fiction. Share these with your children.

- *Why the Crab Has No Head;* retold and illustrated by Barbara Knutson (Carolrhoda) is an African creation tale that explains why Nzambi Mpungu, creator of the earth and sky, decided to give the boastful crab no head.

- In *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone (Clarion Books), three goats trick a mean, ugly troll as they cross his bridge in search of green grass.

- *Crictor* by Tomi Ungerer (HarperCollins) is the story of a boa constrictor who comes to live in France, goes to school with the children, and later catches a burglar. He is awarded a medal and a statue is erected in his honor.
- *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan) tells of Rosie, the hen, who unwittingly leads a hungry fox into one disaster after another. The text tells Rosie's story and the fox's story.
- *Goodnight, Owl!* by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan) introduces a tree-full of noisy animals through repeating text and bright pictures.

GOODNIGHT OWL!

COUNTING BOOKS

Your animal safari can encompass several curriculum areas. Count on animals to interest children in math concepts. These simple counting books are a good place to start.

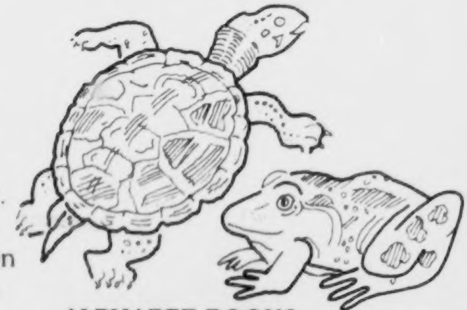
- *The Lifesize Animal Counting Book* by Djinn von Noorden (Dorling Kindersley) is a simple counting book with large, engaging photos of a variety of animals.
- *One Cow Coughs* by Christine Loomis (Ticknor & Fields) is a counting book of barnyard animals.

- *Splash!* by Ann Jonas (Greenwillow) is a counting book with simple pictures of animals found in and around a pond.

POND LIFE

For a rhyming, good time, and a visit to pond life, explore this book:

- *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming (Henry Holt and Company) uses simple, rhyming text and bright pictures to show animal activity at the pond.



ALPHABET BOOKS

A is for animals, and these alphabet books will take you through the other twenty-five letters, as well.

- African *Animals ABC* by Phillippa-Alys Browne (Sierra Club Books) brings twenty-six African animals to life in brilliantly colored illustrations. The text consists of simple rhymes.

- *Amazon ABC* by Kathy Darling, photographs by Tara Darling; (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) shows amazing photos of animal life in the Amazon Rain Forest. From the twisting vine snake to brightly-colored parrots and frogs, these animals grab the viewer's interest and make the alphabet come alive.
- *A Bold Carnivore* by Consie Powell (Roberts Rinehart) introduces twenty-six North American carnivores and the animals that are their prey through life-like color illustrations. Brief text tells where the predator lives, how it hunts, and what animals it hunts.

SCIENCE

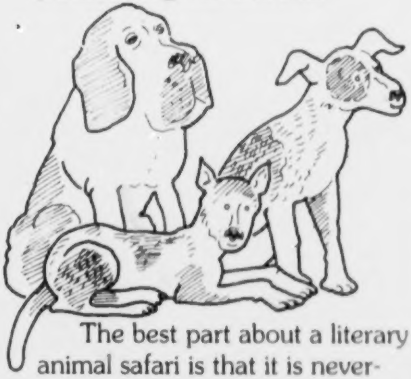
What's a safari without science? Children get to see animals close-up when you include non-fiction books with large, clear photos of animals. Even if the text is too complicated for the children, they will delight in the pictures. Try these favorites.

- *Animals of the Seashore* by Hidetomo Oda (Raintree Publishers) is a non-fiction book full of color photographs of seashore life. The text is too difficult for young children, but the pictures are invaluable.
- *Heads* by Ron and Nancy Goor (Atheneum) uses black-and-white photos to illustrate how various animals' eyes, noses, ears, and teeth help them survive. Children will enjoy and learn from the photos.
- *Polar Animals* by Norman Barrett (Franklin Watts) is too much for preschool children, but it can introduce you to polar animal life. The photos of polar bears, penguins, puffins, and other animals will appeal to all.
- *Sand to Sea* by Stephanie Feeney and Ann Fielding; A Kolowalu Book (Univ. of Hawaii Press) introduces readers to marine life of Hawaii through simple text and color photos of young children at the seashore.
- *Small Cats* by Susan Lumpkin (Weldon Owen Pty Limited) tells about the wild cats that live around the world except for the polar regions and some islands. With color photos, this book concentrates on the smaller ones.

ART

Continue your safari as you travel through art museums looking for familiar animals in great works of art. Explore these books with your children and let the animals increase your powers of observation.

- *Spot a Cat* by Lucy Micklethwait (Dorling Kindersley) lets children hunt for cats in pictures of great artworks from many museums.
- *Spot a Dog* by Lucy Micklethwait (Dorling Kindersley) is similar to the previous book, as children hunt for dogs in pictures of great artworks.



The best part about a literary animal safari is that it is never-ending. Prowl around your library to see what other animals you can snare. Then watch them capture your children's imagination and interest. Happy hunting!

STILL IN THE

BOOK CORNER

TRAVEL WITH A BOOK

by Sandra Malcolm

What better way to introduce young children to the vastness of the world and the diversity found outside their world than through the pages of a book. The books chosen for the Book Corner will have your children traveling from Mexico to Australia to Africa and to China. With the integration of maps and globes, travel brochures, posters and other resources children will experience sights from around the world.

THE HUMMINGBIRDS' GIFT

by Stefan Czernecki and Timothy Rhodes (Hyperion Books) tells the story of a Mexican woman who saves hummingbirds during a drought. They show her how to save her family from starvation.

BEFORE READING, show children a representation of a hummingbird (glass figurine, stuffed, photographs, drawings, etc.) Discuss what they know about hummingbirds. Write responses on chart paper. Then talk about gift giving. Why do people give gifts?

AFTER READING, share a globe and/or a map of Mexico. Locate where you live and Mexico. Discuss the distance between the two places. Talk about the difference in climate.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Have children create hummingbird mobiles to decorate the room.

◆ Using clay or play dough, make and paint hummingbird feeders. Mix nectar to fill the pots and place them outside at appropriate times for your climate.

◆ Nectar recipe: Mix one part sugar to three parts boiling water. Cool before using. Do not use honey, artificial sweetener, or food coloring. These are harmful to hummingbirds.

◆ Encourage children to tell and/or write stories about helping animals and how that animal could help them in return. Make a class book from the stories written.

WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE SEA

by Jeannie Baker (Greenwillow Books) allows young children to experience the past as well as ponder the future of an Australian rain forest through the eyes of a boy camping with his father.

BEFORE READING, have a globe or large world map available. Show Australia and also the US. Then show a close-up map of Australia. Point out North Queenland, Australia where there is a large rain forest (setting of the story). Discuss the phrase *rain forest*.

AFTER READING, ask children what they think was unusual about the pictures. Did they see any "hidden" things in the pictures? Some words in the story may be new to children such as: *reef, cockatoos, vines and creepers, aboriginal children.*

ACTIVITIES

◆ Look closely at each picture. Describe what you see in each picture. Is this forest the same or different than the forests you have been in? How? Show pictures of forests near your region of the country.

◆ Plant small tree seedlings. Watch them grow throughout the year. Measure their growth. Obtain tree seedling samples from a nursery to show various ages of trees (i.e. one year; three years; five years).

◆ Plan an imaginary trip to Australia. How would we get there? What would we take with us? What do you think we would see? Collect travel information about Australia to share with children.

LALA SALAMA (an African Lullaby)

by Hannah Heritage Bozylinsky (Philomel Books) follows a young Masai (Eastern African village) boy as he says good-night to all the animals and then to his mother. The text is written in both English and Swahili.

BEFORE READING, ask children what they know about a lullaby. Does anyone have a favorite lullaby? Sing a lullaby. Share a globe. Show children where the continent of Africa is located. Point out where you live and show it in relation to Africa. Share travel information (pictures, maps, posters, etc.) of Africa. if possible share African artifacts such as clothing, food, and jewelry.

Hang a word strip on the board with the phrases *lala salama* and *peace, sleep well* so that children can see and associate print with speech. Later add a chart with the animal names both in English and Swahili as well as pictures of the animals. Children may want to use these words in creative writing activities.

AFTER READING, ask children if the animals in the story are the same kind of animals we see where we live. Ask children, "*What animals would you include in your lullaby?*" Retell the story by looking closely at the pictures. What's taking place in each? Do children see anything special in the pictures? What? What kind of house does the young boy and his mother live in? How is it the same or different from yours?

ACTIVITIES

◆ Make up a tune to sing the words of the story.

◆ Learn how to say "peace, sleep well" in other languages.

◆ Using stuffed animals, encourage children to act out the story.

◆ Encourage children to paint, draw, color, and/or cut and paste pictures of themselves saying *lala salama* to their favorite animal. Make a class book or bulletin board using the pictures.

WHERE IS PAPA NOW?

by Celeste Conway (Boyds Mill Press, Honesdale, PA) tells of a young girl who waits for her Papa to return from a sea voyage, as her Mama tells her where he is and what he is doing. The period of the story is mid-nineteenth century, a time not often addressed in children's literature.

BEFORE READING, ask children if anyone they love very much ever traveled far away or been away for a long time. Who? Then look at the cover of the book. It has many interesting pictures. What do children see? How do they think Papa will be traveling?

AFTER READING, find the places on a map where Papa traveled. Did he sail far away? How do we know? What kinds of things does he bring Eliza and her Mama when he returns from his trips? How can we tell from the story?

Look closely at all of the illustrations. Discuss what is seen. Talk about collections of things. What collections do you see in the pictures? What could you collect?

ACTIVITIES

◆ Start a collection of something in your classroom. Encourage children to add to the collection if they go on imaginary trips.

◆ Build a ship to travel the seas. Plan trips to far away places. Where could you go? What would you see? What could you bring back?

◆ Write a new class book of travels to faraway places. Collect travel posters, brochures and pictures for children to cut and paste or to use as models for their drawings.

◆ Introduce a globe to the class. Discuss ways to travel around the world. How could you go around the world in a ship?

◆ Encourage children to paint a picture of Papa's ship on the ocean. How could they show Eliza waiting for the ship?

◆ Create a game called "Where is Papa Now?" Have someone leave the circle and hide. Another child asks "Where is Papa now?" "Mama" can give clues until Papa is found. Or a cut-out ship could be hidden. Clues are given until the ship is found.

STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

TOYS AROUND THE WORLD

by Carol Anfin and John Anfin

Regardless of geography or nationality, people are bound together by their similarities. You can use books about toys to connect children with one another from all parts of the globe.

In Africa, wires, sticks, and cornstalks are often bent and shaped into cars, trucks, bicycles, and other vehicles. All of these special push toys are called *galimoto* (GAL-lee-moe-toe) in Chichewa, the national language of Malawi, Africa. *Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams (Mulberry Books) tells the story of a young African boy who, using persistence and creativity, collects old scraps of wire to make a galimoto. As a follow-up activity, encourage children to make their own *galimotos* using pipe-cleaners or scraps of electrical wire.

Have globes and maps available so that children can locate France and the other countries Egbert visits in The *Runaway Duck* by David Lyon (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books). This is a delightful account of the remarkable adventures of Egbert, a pull toy on wheels in a duck shape.

Mama, Do You Love Me? by Barbara M. Joosse (Scholastic) describes the unconditional love of a mother for her daughter. Throughout the book, the little girl, Dear One, is depicted holding her doll. The story takes place in the northern part of Alaska. Young children will be captivated by the bold, colorful illustrations drawn by Barbara Lavallee which accurately portray the Inuit culture. At the end of the book, there is information about animals and artifacts of the Arctic region.

Jane Yolen introduces children to an ancient Chinese folk tale in The *Emperor and the Kite* (Philomel Books). Djeow Seow, a tiny princess who is so small that she is ignored by everyone, becomes a heroine when she uses her stick-and-paper kite to save the life of her father, the emperor. Children will delight in the resourcefulness and final triumph of the courageous little princess.

The Legend of The Bluebonnet is a Comanche folktale, retold and beautifully illustrated by Tomie DePaola (Putnam). Although the legend of the bluebonnet is about the origin of a flower, it also tells the story of a young girl, She-Who-Is-Alone, and her warrior doll. In order to save the Comanche People from a terrible drought and famine, She-Who-Is-Alone throws her most valued possession, her doll, into a fire as an offering to the Great Spirits. As a result of her sacrifice, the Great Spirits fill the land with beautiful blue flowers and rain begins to fall.

Charlotte Pomerantz describes the unique joy of a Jamaican childhood in *The Chalk Doll* (Lippincott). Rose has a cold and her mother entertains her by telling her a story about the wonderful fun she had as a child playing with rag dolls she made herself. She explains that she couldn't afford to buy one of the beautiful chalk dolls displayed in the shop windows. Although Rose has many chalk dolls, she decides to make a rag doll.

Matreshka by Becky Hickox Ayres (Bantam Doubleday Dell) is based on Russian folklore. Matreshka is a wooden nesting doll, but she is no ordinary toy. The tiny doll manages to save her owner Kata from Baba Yaga, a terrible witch. Children will delight in the ingenious ways the Matreshkas use their magic.

Hans Christian Anderson's *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* was first published in 1838. Today children can still enjoy this classic tale retold by Tor Seidler and beautifully illustrated by Fred Marcellino (HarperCollins). The illustrations depict charming scenes of family life in Denmark long ago. Children will delight in the story of a tin soldier who, despite having only one leg, is destined for greatness.

FOLKTALES AROUND THE GLOBE

by Karel Kilimnik

Folktales provide a wonderful way of learning about cultural similarities and differences around the world. This list of books just scratches the surface. They tell good stories along with providing information about the culture they represent. These folktales are longer than many picture books so a more developed attention span is useful when listening to them.

- Verna Aardema has delighted readers for years with her folk tales from Africa. Many are found in the collection entitled *Misoso* (An Apple Soup Book/ An Imprint of Alfred A. Knopf). The introduction gives some of Aardema's own background as well as setting the stage for the collection. A map helps us see where each tale originated. Each story begins with a glossary of terms and ends with more background information. We travel from Sierra Leone on the west coast down to South Africa and over to Zanzibar.
- African influences are felt in the Alabama folktale, *Wiley and the Hairy Man*, retold by Jedy Sierra (Lodestar Books). Wiley's daddy falls off the ferry one day and disappears. Folks whisper that the Hairy Man got him. Brian Pinkney's illustrations vibrate with life as we see Wiley and his mom outwit the Hairy Man.
- In Hawaii, children know that a woman, not a man, lives on the moon. *The Woman in the Moon*, retold by Jama Kim Rattigan (Little, Brown), tells her story. Besides a glossary, there is a highly informative Author's Note along with a listing of sources Ms. Rattigan used in researching this book.
- *Marushka and the Twelve Month Brothers* retold by Philemon Sturges and Ann Vojtech (North-South Books), is an old folktale passed down from generation to generation in Czech and Slovak villages. Marushka lives with her stepmother and Holena, her stepsister in a village at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. Simple jealously makes life miserable for beautiful Marushka as she struggles to do all the cleaning and cooking for her demanding family. In the middle of winter, Holena demands violets and Marushka is sent out into the blinding snow with orders not return until she finds some. Marushka stumbles upon the twelve month brothers who, charmed by her sweetness, help fulfill the order. The demands upon Marushka increase until Holena brings about a terrible storm (an ending for certain mean characters).
- Baba Yaga is a familiar figure in Russian folklore. She lives deep in the woods in a small house standing on chicken legs. In *Baba Yaga*, retold and illustrated by Katya Arnold (North-South Books), she is a mean witch intent on eating the little boy, Tishka. The story is similar to Hansel and Gretel in that Tishka manages to escape becoming Baba Yaga's dinner.
- The next book is based on one of the first ghost stories to appear in print in China (in the third century A.D.). Laurence Yep's version of that ghost story is *The Man Who Tricked a Ghost* (Bridgewater). Sung, a very brave man, had a good attitude towards scary things, *"We are all forms of the same thing which makes us all cousins. So why should I be afraid?"* He gets the opportunity to test his theory one night while returning home from visiting a friend. His cleverness saves him from being killed by the ghost. Read it and become braver yourself!

Do some comparing of stories to observe and describe similarities. Compare language, dress, food, and customs. Use a globe or map to mark all the places you've been. Involve parents—send home a note describing the book to be read and asking if they have anything to add to learn more about that particular culture and country.

LEPRECHAUNS AND MENEHUNE

by Susan Entz

Explore the global adventures theme through folktales. Many cultures have legends about mythical beings empowered with special abilities.

Select two characters to be explored in depth and feature them at storytime. Each tale allows you to explore the myths and cultures that have generated them.

Ireland's Leprechauns are the most widely known of the mythical "wee people." They are industrious, usually rich, but also often solitary and grumpy. Leprechauns are known for working day and night to mend shoes for other fairies, for which they get a piece of gold.

Hawaiian children grow up with tales of the *Menehune* (pronounced *may-nay-hoo-nay*). These hard-wording little folks work cooperatively at night to build roads, walls, and fish ponds that help people. At the break of day, they disappear.

SHARE THE TALES

Share a picture book about leprechauns or relate the tale using a flannelboard. After relating the story, ask children a series of questions about leprechauns. Record the answers on a chart.

Later tell children a tale about the Menehune. Ask the same questions and record the answers.

Then have children compare their findings.

STICK PUPPETS

Extend the tales with simple stick puppets. Make materials available at the art table for children to draw their own ideas of these mythical characters. Mount each one on cardboard and attach a tongue depressor.

Since the Menehune always work in groups, encourage children to make several little people puppets.

Create other stick puppets to support the themes. Make a pot-of-gold puppet for the leprechaun to hide behind. Since Menehune like to swim, make a variety of sealife puppets for them to play with.

ART ACTIVITY

Children can work together like Menehune to make a large mural. Menehune are known for working all night to build rock walls. Use large, textured sponges with dark gray paint to make a lava wall on long blue shelf paper.

Add some pasture land to the mural and then form a huge rainbow of handprints. Draw large arches across the top of the paper and show children where to place their prints: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and then purple. Then children can add a pot of gold and hide little Menenhune and Leprechauns in the design or use the mural as a backdrop for a stick puppet play.

BLOCK PLAY

Your little leprechauns can use the blocks to build structures to hide their pots of gold.

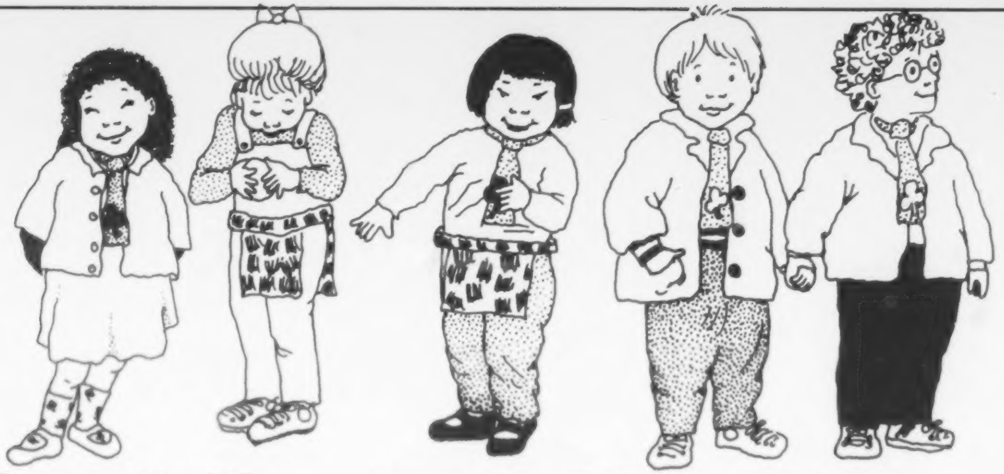
Encourage the Menehune to build elaborate fish ponds of the rocks found near the seashore to trap the fish for dinner. Add fish or other sealife to the enclosure.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Make simple costumes so children can "become" these legendary wee folk.

Menehune live in a very warm climate so they wear very little clothing. Make a simple *malo*, or loincloth, using a strap from a discarded grocery bag, measuring 24" by 2". Make two smaller pieces, measuring 7" by 12".

Color each paper with black or brown crayons using the straight lines or zigzag design. Then wad up the paper into a ball and "crush it" to make it look like traditional *tapa* bark cloth. Tape the small pieces to form a front and a back flap. Punch two hole in the ends of the longer piece and attach



yarn. Put it around the child's waist and tie in place.

Put the long piece around the child's waist and attach with tape. Fold one of the smaller pieces and stick behind the "belt" and the second piece in the back.

Use a small, dark colored, discarded jacket as the basis of the Leprechaun costume. Each of the children can make a simple Leprechaun ties from construction paper and crepe paper. Add a shamrock for the tie design.

GAMES

Menehune help people, but Leprechauns play tricks on them. Modify the standard group game, *Duck, Duck, Goose* to reflect this fantasy theme. Have children sit in the circle, pretending to be "wee folk." Tell them that one child will walk around the circle behind them and tap them on the head. If that person says, *"Help,"* that means they are a Menehune, one who helps people. She will say, *"Help"* many times, because Menehune work and play together.

Eventually, the person will say, *"Trick."* That means the person has found the Leprechaun who likes to trick people.

As soon as she calls, *"Trick,"* she will start running around the circle to try to get back to this vacant spot on the circle before being tagged. The person tapped should get up fast and chase her. If the tapped person does not catch up, he will be the next person to tap heads around the circle.

MUSIC

Tune: "Where is Thumbkin?"
Where's the Menehune?
Where's the Menehune?
Building a wall
Building a wall
The sun is coming up now
The sun is coming up now.
Run and hide
Run and hide.

Other verses:
☘ *Swimming with the fish*
☘ *Clearing a road*
☘ *Building a fish pond*
☘ *Paddling a canoe*
☘ *Working together*

Where's the Leprechaun?
Where's the Leprechaun?
Hiding his gold,
Hiding his gold,
In a great big pot
In a great big pot
By the rainbow.
By the rainbow.

Other verses:
☘ *Sewing new shoes for other fairies*
☘ *To earn gold*

The children can also do an Irish jig.

FOOD

Plan a mini-luau for the Menehune in your group. Legend says that they are particularly fond of bananas, sweet potatoes, and pork.

Another day, have an Irish feast. Leprechauns enjoy potatoes, Irish stew, and soda bread.

BOOKS

📖 *Peter Panini and the Search for the Menehune* by Stacy Kaopuiki (Hawaiian Island Concepts)
📖 *Tim O'Toole and the Wee Folk* by Gerald McDermott (Viking)
📖 *Jamie O'Rourke and the Big Potato* by Tomie DePaola (Putnam)

NOTE: Menehune is both singular and plural. It is always capitalized when referring to the wee people. In the lower case, it means cooperation or to act cooperatively.

TIME OUT TO CELEBRATE

by Tania K. Cowling

There are some many celebrations in the world that can be brought into the classroom. Having children participate in activities that bring these festivals to the class is a marvelous break from the everyday routine. It is important however that this is not the way you teach children about global awareness. Multicultural themes should be woven throughout your everyday curriculum to send a positive message to children.

In the month of March, two celebrations come to mind that children can learn about, plan activities for, and enjoy. These celebrations come from Ireland with the festival of Saint Patrick's Day on March 17 and Japan with Doll's Day on March 3. Japan has many special days for children. Looking ahead, you'll find Children's Day celebrated on May 5. (There are activities for this day at the end of this article.)

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland and the Irish, was born around 385 A.D. in Northern Wales. He brought Christianity to the country through much teaching. He died on March 17, 461 A.D. The anniversary of his death is celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day.

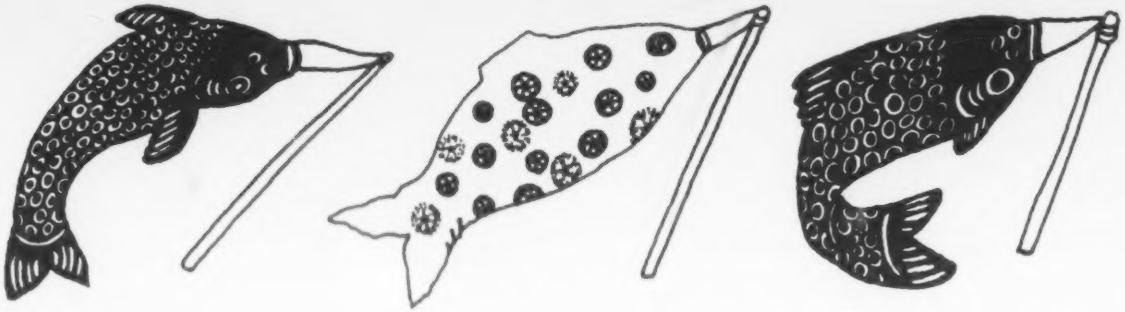
The First official celebration of St. Patrick's Day in the United States occurred in Moorestown, New Jersey in 1780. It was authorized by George Washington. Today St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by the Irish as well as many other Americans with the wearing of green, song, dances, parties, and parades. People wear the color green in memory of Ireland, *the Emerald Isle*.

▶ **Clover Mask** Trace a clover pattern on green construction paper and cut this out. Position the mask over the child's face and mark the position of the eyes. Remove this from the face and cut out the eye holes. For the band, cut two 1 1/2" x 6" strips from green paper. Glue one strip on each side of the mask. To wear, overlap the strips and tape them to fit. A stapler could be used instead of glue and tape. Let children decorate the mask with markers, crayons, stickers, glitter, and feathers. Let them be creative and have fun!

▶ **Leaping Leprechaun** Let children draw a Leprechaun on heavy white paper. Draw in facial features and glue on a beard of fluffy cotton. Show children how to take strips of construction paper and accordion pleat arms and legs. Attach these to the main body with a stapler. Cut out little hands and boots and glue these onto the arms and legs. Punch a hole through the top of the hat. Tie a loop of elastic through the hole and watch the elf dance an Irish jig as you manipulate the puppet with your hand.

▶ **Irish Bingo** Make blank bingo cards, one for each child. Draw symbols for St. Patrick's Day (shamrocks, gold coins, Leprechauns, top hat, rainbow, pot of gold, etc.). Write all the symbols that you have drawn on a separate tally sheet. To play, pass out pennies for markers. As you call out a symbol (and show a picture of it for younger children), the players will place a penny on the symbol (if they have it). The first player to make an Irish bingo wins!

▶ **Shamrock Dessert** This dessert can be prepared ahead of time and frozen. Place three small scoops of vanilla ice cream in a shamrock shape on a small paper plate. Use a piece of licorice, spiral cookie, or breadstick as a stem. Sprinkle the ice cream with green sugar crystals. Put this plate in the freezer. By the time you set the tables and gather your children, the dessert will be ready to eat!



JAPANESE DOLL FESTIVAL

On March 3, the Japanese celebrate *HINA MATSURI* or Girl's Doll Festival. It is also called the *Peach Blossom Festival* because peach blossoms often bloom during this time. On this day, doll collections, used only for this festival, are displayed on a rack of shelves covered with red cloth. Many of the dolls are family heirlooms that often include the emperor, his empress, and their attendants. Furniture, trees, and a branch of a flowering peach are also displayed. The peach blossoms symbolize happiness in marriage, as well as mildness, softness, and peacefulness, which are qualities many girls strive to acquire. Young girls and their mothers dress in pretty kimonos and go visiting during this festival to admire doll collections and have refreshments which often include tea and rice cakes.

▶ **Peach Blossom Art** On a sheet of construction paper, draw branches with a brown crayon. To replicate the peach blossoms, make a batch of fresh popcorn. While it's hot, stir in a box of orange Jello crystals. Mix until the kernels are coated. Take these cooled peach colored blossoms and glue them onto the drawn branches.

▶ **Foam Cup Dolls** Creatively make dolls using foam drinking cups. Turn these upside down, adding a foam ball or ping pong ball as its head. Glue these together. With finds from a collage box (items such as rickrack, lace, toothpicks, fabric, ribbon, sequins, yarn, cotton, etc.) decorate these dolls using tacky glue to attach these decorations. Don't forget to draw on a face with markers. Cover bookshelves with a red cloth and line up these dolls to be admired. For a follow-upvactivity, have each child (boys and girls) bring in a doll or action figure from home to share with the class, like a Show and Tell circletime, and then display the dolls on a shelf, too!

▶ **Refreshments** Rice cakes can be found in any supermarket. Serve these with a weak decaffeinated tea or juice. For pretty sandwiches, use small cookie cutters to cut flower shapes from bread. Take whipped cream cheese and tint it a peach color (a drop or red and yellow food colors). Spread this between two bread shapes.

BOY'S FESTIVAL OR CHILDREN'S DAY

Boys' Festival (TANGO-NO-SEKKU) is observed by the Japanese on May 5. It is the same day as the Children's Day festival. The Japanese government encourages boys and girls to respect and love each other.

Boys' Day is also known as the Kite festival. For this occasion, a paper or cloth carp kite is made or purchased for each son, with the largest for the oldest and progressively smaller ones for each younger son. The kites are hung on bamboo poles outside the home with the largest on the top followed by the smaller ones. The carp symbolizes perseverance, strength, and bravery.

The Children's Day celebration starts when the entire family takes a special bath. This is called *shobu-yu* and is done to wash away the bad spirits and bad luck. Some families go to the shrine where priests bless and ask for the children's health and happiness. Afterward a special meal is prepared.

▶ **Shobu-Yu** Set up a large pan of water in the classroom. In Japan, iris flowers are placed in this water. Put in plastic baby dolls and let children take turns bathing the "children."

▶ **Carp Kite** Have each child make a paper plate fish. Color and decorate this fish as desired. Attach crepe paper streamers to the tail end of the fish. Use a tongue depressor, thin dowel, or bamboo stick for a handle. Wave the carp kite as children parade around the classroom!

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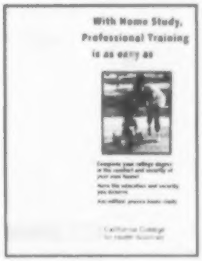

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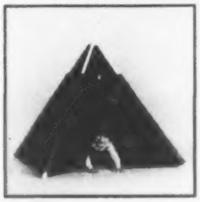

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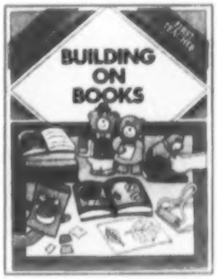

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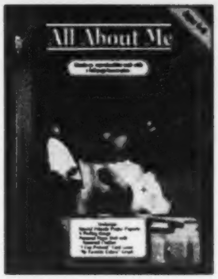

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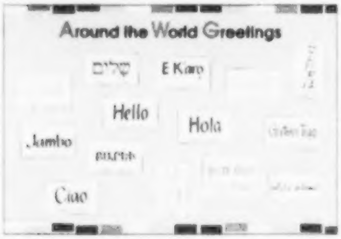

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FIRST TEACHER

Vol. 18 No. 3

For People Who Care for Young Children

May/June 1997

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A Happy, Healthy Spring

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- Checklist for a Healthy Classroom
- Teaching Basic Health and Safety Skills
- Exploring Germs
- Sensing the Changes in Spring
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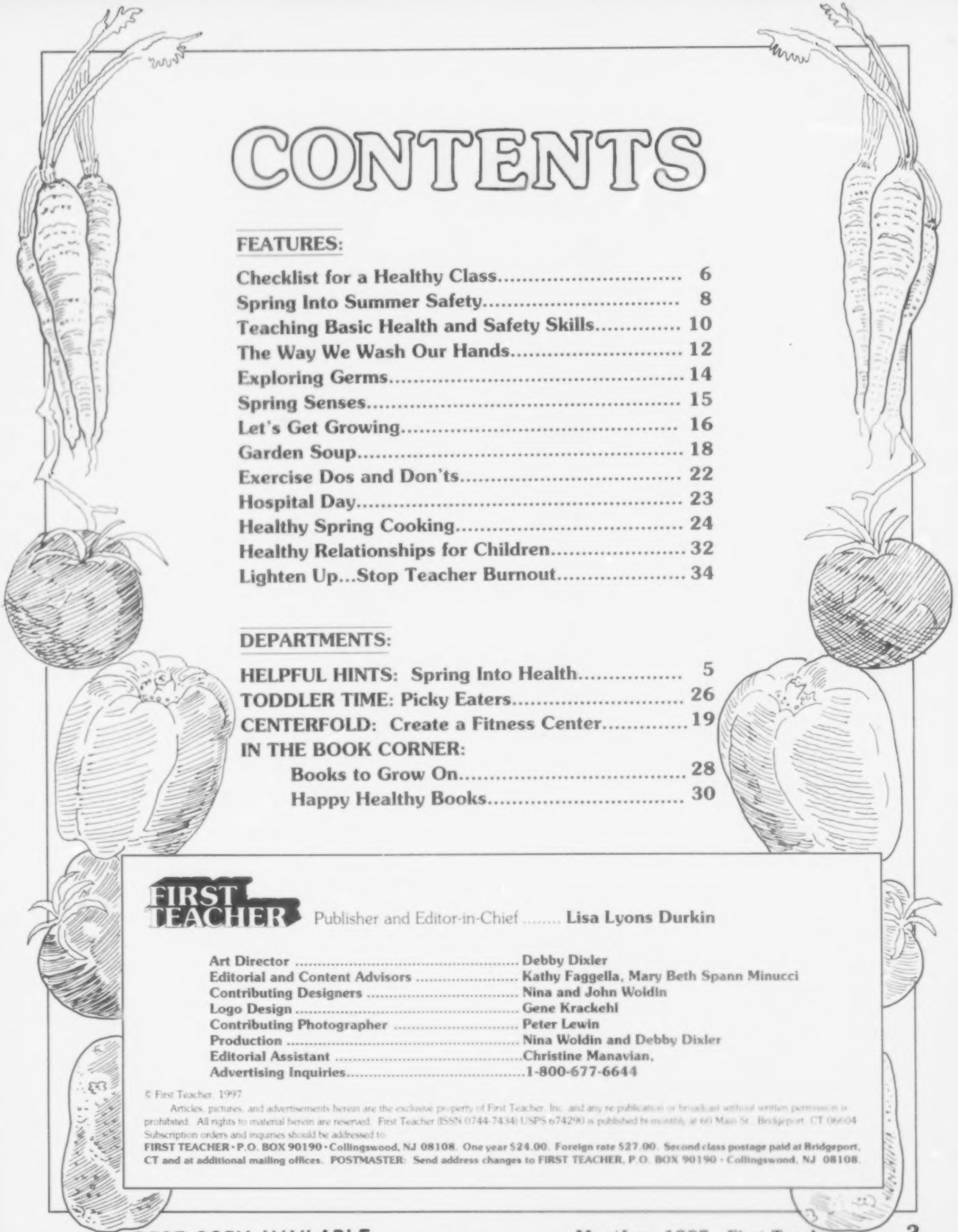

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Durkin

Spring is here! That means it's time for spring cleaning—a time for taking stock of our centers, classrooms, homes, and ourselves. What better spring cleaning goal can there be than to make sure that the environment is a healthy one of our children? This issue of *First Teacher* will give you tips for taking care of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social health of your children—and yourself.

It is important to teach young children basic hygiene. Tooth brushing, cleaning up after yourself, containing germs with tissues and by washing hands—we show you how to teach children how to take care of themselves and why this is so important. Barbara Backer describes how to make healthy hands a fun unit for young learners. And Susan Entz helps children learn about germs through art, cooking, and dramatic play.

It's a healthy idea to mix growing children with growing plants. Barbara Fischer takes the garden theme into all areas of the curriculum. And then you'll learn to make Garden Soup, a healthy lunch for everyone. There are eight more recipes in "Healthy Spring Cooking" by Tanya Cowling.

And there is advice from Jeannine Perez on handling those picky toddlers who "refuse to even take a 'thank-you' taste of nutritious food from their plate." She demonstrates how to make preparing, sefving, and eating food in your toddler room a pleasurable experience—especially if you involve the parents too.

Gail Jones shows you how to create a simple fitness center in your classroom, complete with an exercise dice game, movement tapes, relaxation massages, and more.

Your children need to learn basic social skills in order to form healthy relationships with their peers and with the adults in their world. After you read Sherry Burrell's article, you will be able to help children develop these skills through games and role-modeling.

Last, but not least, we address your health—the emotional well-being of you, the teacher. When you start feeling grouchy, tired, eat too little or too much, when you feel that "nothing ever goes right" you are experiencing the classic signs of teacher burnout. There are 10 easy suggestions for "putting the spring back into your step" this spring at the end of the issue. You'll enjoy the season and be ready for our next issue "Messy Summer Learning."

PLAN AHEAD WITH *FIRST TEACHER* THEMES

- **September/October 1997: Organize Your Class**
- **November/December 1997: Friends and Family**
- **January/February 1998: Explore Numbers and Letters**
- **March/April 1998: Games for Growing**
- **July/August 1998: Beat the Heat**
- **September/October 1998: Learning Centers**

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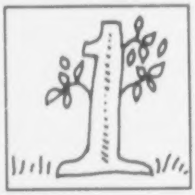
HELPFUL HINTS

SPRING INTO HEALTH

by Gail P. Jones



Spring means getting outside and breathing fresh air, exercising, and feeling good! Make sure your children know what is "safe and unsafe" by playing games such as a scavenger hunt. Example: find something you should not put in your mouth, find something we should sit on, but not stand on; etc. (Record their findings and discuss them later.)

Plan a tour of the outside play areas. Turn it into a treasure hunt complete with a numbered picture map! As each play area or piece of equipment is "found," remind children of its proper use and rules.

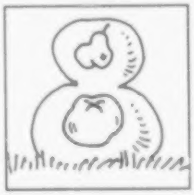
Spring flowers may mean spring sneezes! Teach children how to sneeze into their folded arm at the elbow so that they don't share germs. Emphasize washing hands after playing in the dirt, etc.

Take a "fanny pack" outside to hold tissues, first aid items such as sterile wipes, Bandaids, bee sting kits, and class lists to record children leaving for home from the playground. (This is especially important if you have a substitute teacher.)

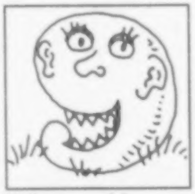
Active children are healthy children and vice-versa! Plan activities that require the use of all body parts and help children use a variety of skills such as strength building, endurance, balancing, running, hopping, and swinging.

Evaluate fitness skills with fun games such as Simon Says and Follow the Leader.

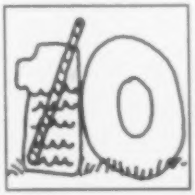
Now that spring has arrived, review the food pyramid and encourage children to practice a healthy diet. They can create a chart to record the eating of enough fruits, vegetables, and grains!



Plant a garden with lots of healthy fruits and vegetables.



"A healthy mind in a healthy body" requires the ability to handle stress, solve problems, and choose healthy solutions. Teach relaxation skills and provide opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. Select activities that use all the senses.



And, since most people don't drink enough water, why not let children make personal plastic water bottles or canteens to encourage drinking water regularly—a healthy habit.

CHECKLIST FOR A HEALTHY CLASS

by Karen Stephens

With spring comes many changes; most of them good! Perhaps new children will be entering your program. And to be sure, warmer weather will allow teachers to expand the teaching/learning environment to include the outdoors for longer periods of the day.

Shifting gears to adjust to new children, to new weather conditions, and to new potential hazards requires thought and preparation. To ensure health and safety, prevention is always the best policy. Below I've provided a checklist for a basic spring health and safety inspection. I hope it helps you "cover all the bases" so everyone can enjoy a healthy spring season!

☐ Have new children joined your program? Review medical and immunization records. Alert parents to missing information.

☐ Review new children's application forms for food allergies. Post food allergies to alert food service personnel.

☐ Review new children's applications for special health needs, such as allergic reactions to bee stings or asthmatic conditions. Work with parents and staff to accommodate these special needs.

☐ Prepare for outdoor play. Ask parents to send children in appropriate attire. Remind them to have seasonal changes of extra clothes in cubbies.

☐ Collect extras of coats, boots, mittens, and such. Spring weather fluctuates a lot in most places. Children may need to add to or take off the clothing they arrived in by afternoon.

☐ Inspect all climbing equipment. Is it developmentally appropriate? Is it in good condition and safe for use? If not, arrange for repair.

☐ Inspect, and repair if necessary, all play equipment, such as big wheels and wagons. Make sure all toys are developmentally appropriate.

☐ Restock your first aid kits in each classroom.

☐ To limit children's exposure to damaging sun rays, ask parents to send a bottle of sunscreen for their child's use. Label each bottle. Encourage the use of hats and light colored clothing.

☐ Update posted emergency phone numbers in each classroom, such as the hospital and poison control center.

☐ Review evacuation plans. Post them. Routinely practice disaster drills, such as tornadoes or earthquakes.

☐ Check to make sure fire extinguisher inspection stickers are up to date.

☐ Observe staff regularly. Are they washing their hands at appropriate times? Are they reminding children to do the same?

☐ Are tissues readily available indoors and out?

☐ Are rubber gloves for teachers dealing with injuries available indoors and out?

☐ Do spring meal menus reflect seasonal fruits, vegetables, and juices? Observe food personnel in the kitchen to make sure they are following sound health practices.

☐ Are poisonous cleaning supplies locked in cabinets?

☐ Are medicines for children labeled with their names and locked in cabinets? Are parents conscientiously filling out medicine dispensation forms? Are

staff administering medications as instructed by parents?

☐ Review staff files to make sure medicals and immunizations, such as tetanus, TB, and Hepatitis B are up to date.

☐ Review staff files to make sure first aid and CPR certificates are up to date. Arrange for certification if necessary.

☐ Review laundering schedules for kitchen and nap supplies. If too infrequent, revise schedule.

☐ Are child or employee injury report forms readily available? Are they completed conscientiously?

☐ Is the classroom, including bathrooms and eating areas, well ventilated, clean, and sanitary?

☐ Is the outdoor sandbox sanitary and free of foul matter?

☐ Is the outdoor drinking fountain installed and operable?

☐ Check limbs on play yard trees to determine need for pruning broken branches.

☐ Drain spots that might hold water where mosquitoes can breed, such as the bottom of tire swings or waterplay troughs.

☐ Spot check and reinforce sanitation practices used during toileting and diapering.

☐ Hold a staff training meeting on health and safety procedures and accident prevention. Make sure staff members understand universal precautions for handling blood-borne pathogens.

☐ Include articles on keeping children healthy and safe in your spring parent newsletter. Inform parents of car-seat lending programs and the availability of low cost childhood immunizations. Notify parents of developmental screening programs, such as vision and hearing.

☐ Obtain brochures and posters on ensuring children's health and safety from your local hospital or health department. Post by your parent bulletin board or sign-in area.

PAGES FOR PARENTS
Duplicate and give copies to your families

SPRING INTO SUMMER SAFETY

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

As winter gives way to warmer days, children gear up to enjoy the sunshine and fresh air and we welcome the chance to let them run and play outside. But, did you know that as the number of outdoor activities increase, so does the chance that a child will be seriously injured or killed? According to spokespeople at the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the first and only national organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury, *"More unintentional childhood deaths and injuries occur between the summer months of May to August, what emergency rooms call 'trauma season', than any other time of year."* Such unintentional injuries are the number one killer of children ages 14 and under.

The Safe Kids Campaign offers a long list of such eye-opening statistics. For example, did you know that:

▶in 1993, nearly 290 children, ages 14 and under, died in bicycle related crashes, and each year almost 400,000 are injured?

▶each year, drowning takes the lives of more than 1,000 children under the age of 14, ranking as the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death to children in this age group?

▶children, ages four and under, have a drowning death rate two to three times higher than any other age group?

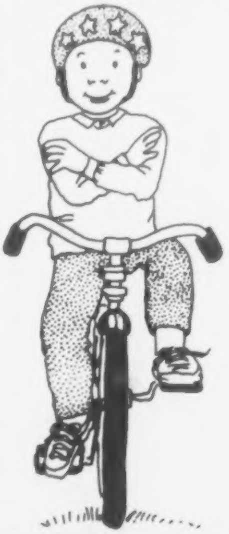
▶for every child that drowns, an additional four are hospitalized for near-drownings?

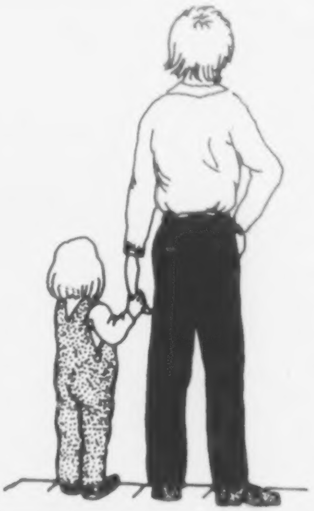
While such grim facts are unthinkable, your best chance of protecting your child is to learn about possible hazards and what you can do about them. The National SAFE KIDS Campaign offers some of the following guidelines for assuring you and your children a safe and happy spring and summer.

▶Always supervise children even if they are "only in the backyard."

▶Make sure all fences and gates are secure. Fix broken rails and make sure there are no protruding parts.

▶Remove poisonous plants. If you have any concerns about a plant, contact the nearest Poison Control Center or a





medical professional.

▶Keep tools out of children's reach. Never leave gardening tools where children can find them or fall on them.

▶Lock up barbecue grills and gasoline containers.

▶Make sure children drink plenty of water. Children can become easily dehydrated. Periodically, bring children in for a rest and a drink, especially on hot and humid days.

▶Make sure children use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, even when it's cloudy.

▶Inspect playgrounds for rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces such as concrete or asphalt.

▶Children under 10 should never cross the street alone.

▶Have children wear bike helmets every time they ride. Buy only helmets that meet safety standards.

▶Never leave children alone or near water. Parents and caregivers should always watch while children are playing in or near water, even shallow wading pools. Children can drown in one inch of water and it can happen in the short amount of time it takes to answer the phone.

▶Children should learn to swim and should begin lessons usually after the age of three.

▶Adults who care for children should learn infant and child CPR.

▶Adults who don't know how to swim should learn.

SPECIAL SAFETY GUIDE OFFER

To help stop needless childhood tragedies like those described above, the National SAFE KIDS Campaign has developed the *SAFE KIDS Gear Up Guide*, a reference handbook to help families and caregivers keep children from being injured at home, in the car, or at play. The publication is a key component of the Campaign's new initiative, SAFE KIDS Week, May 10-18, 1997. In addition to distributing thousands of copies of the guide, the Campaign will be holding SAFE KIDS Gear Up games in the nation's capital and in communities throughout the nation. To receive your copy of the guide, send $2.00 to: National SAFE KIDS Campaign

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TEACHING BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY SKILLS

by Karen Stephens

Wondering how to lead children to good health and safety habits? Well, when teaching children how we want them to care for themselves, the best approach is always, always proper role modeling. Luckily the early childhood classroom overflows with teachable moments!

TEACH TOOTH BRUSHING

At least after lunches, children should brush their teeth. (Mirrors at eye level motivate children to stick with the job of brushing!) Staff should brush along with children. It's not a bad idea for staff to floss in front of children either!

TEACH SANITATION

Children should observe staff washing down eating surfaces before and after meals. Children can even help. Child-sized brooms allow children to help sweep the floor after meals. Children can watch food service personnel wash dishes. Weekly, after nap, children can deliver cot sheets and pillow cases to be laundered. At day's end, children can help collect toys that will be run through the dishwasher to be sanitized.

CONTAINING GERMS

Young children can be taught to contain germs so they don't get passed on to others. Tissues should be readily available inside and outside. Children should be taught to sneeze away from others. Hands should be washed after sneezing. Classroom policies can teach children that when they are ill, they'll recuperate better at home, and they'll expose fewer children to their illness. Children can take responsibility for helping friends stay well.

TEACH PREVENTION

Help children understand the basics of good health and safety. Help them anticipate their own needs. Lessons vary according to seasonal climates.

For instance, talk about the need for sunscreen during summer. Encourage children to drink water frequently to prevent dehydration during vigorous play. In summer, teach them to seek outdoor shade to prevent heatstroke.

In winter, the need for keeping all extremities covered is important. Talk about ways of fending off frostbite and hypothermia. Help children create an emergency kit as a gift

for their parent's car. Include things such as a coffee can, raisins, and candles.

INCLUDE KIDS IN ROUTINE INSPECTIONS

Children can help teachers complete routine health and safety inspections. Children simply tour the classroom and play yard with teachers, looking for specific health and safety criteria. For instance, children can help spot broken toys or splintered climbing equipment. They can alert teachers to electrical sockets needing plugs. They can tell teachers when tissue boxes or toilet rolls are running low. They can even go on a field trip together to purchase nonslip rugs to replace slippery throw rugs.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHING HEALTH AND SAFETY

There are plenty of free or low-cost materials to help you teach health and safety. Materials range from posters to elaborate teaching kits. Here are but a few resources: poison control center, health department, American Heart Association, the Child Care and Adult Food Program, National Dairy Council, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the NAEYC. I especially recommend brochures and the book published by NAEYC titled *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* by Kend-rick, Kaufman, and Messenger.

TEACH IN CENTERS

As with any other curriculum topic, the more varied children's health and safety learning experiences are, the more likely they are to grasp and understand concepts. Be sure to include learning opportunities in many different learning centers.

Dramatic Play Create a dress up center where children can pretend to be a doctor, nurse, Red Cross worker, emergency technician, fire fighter, or dentist. Friends, puppets, dolls, and even stuffed animals can serve as patients. You can purchase play hospitals equipped with miniature hospital equipment so children can act out health themes.

Block Centers can be turned into cities with doctor's offices, hospitals, roads for ambulances, and even landing pads for medic helicopters.

Reading Center Visit your local children's librarian. The library often has lists of books, music, or even videos that relate to specific topics, including health and safety.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL VISITORS

Contact your local health professionals and ask for private tours for your classroom. Visit a doctor's or dentist's office. Visit a hospital nursery or pediatrics' floor.

Fire fighters, nurses, doctors, dentists, and Red Cross workers are often willing to visit classrooms to bring learning to life. Be sure to prepare the visitors for questions your children might ask. Encourage them to bring some real life tools of their trade with them to make learning more understandable and engaging for the children.

THE WAY WE WASH OUR HANDS

by Barbara F. Backer

We don't need to read medical research studies to know that schools and childcare centers are full of germs. Our children have passed colds back and forth to each other all winter. We've dealt with bouts of flu, upset stomachs, and outbreaks of chicken pox. But we can look to health studies to show us ways to cut down on the spread of infectious diseases in our centers and schools.

Time and again, studies show that the primary carrier of infections is unwashed or improperly washed hands! Early one school year, I read such a study and decided to wage a campaign against germs in my classroom focusing on handwashing, first as a unit of study, then as an all-the-time, necessary procedure.

I was astonished that year at the difference in our rates of illness and the resulting difference in our attendance rates. There were fewer children absent in my class than in any other in the school! I didn't miss any days due to illness.

HEALTHY HANDS

We began with a unit on hands, focusing on what hands can do. We used fingerpaint, painted our hands to make a bulletin board of handprints, and used a variety of art materials during the week. We used our hands to build with blocks and DUPLO, played with hand puppets and finger puppets, and acted out fingerplays. We stretched and pounded play dough and dug for small treasures buried in the sand.

Now it was time to talk about caring for our hands. We discussed why we wear mittens and gloves. Then we talked about dirt and germs and about why we need to keep our hands clean.

Working with one small group at a time, I demonstrated proper handwashing techniques so each child had a close-up view. Then each child had the opportunity to practice proper washing while the group and I looked on, reminding each other of all the steps.

I repeated this activity until every child had practiced proper washing. Next we concentrated on "when" we should wash. I followed a health expert's guidelines.

We all washed hands as soon as we arrived at school. This kept us from spreading our "at home" germs throughout the school.

We washed hands before preparing or eating food, and again, after eating. (Adults working with infants/toddlers need to wash before and after feeding each child.)

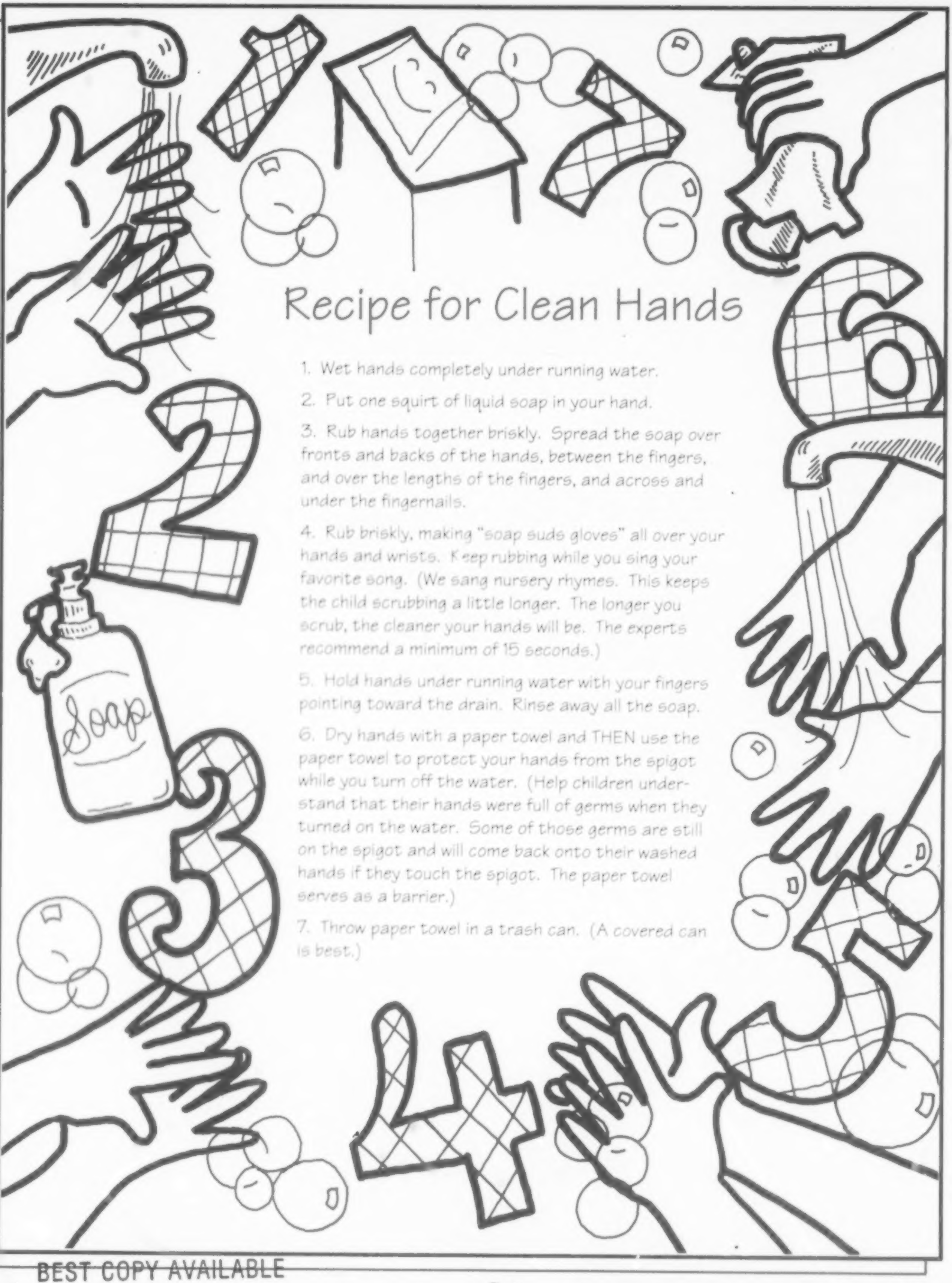
We washed after using the toilet, wiping noses, sneezing, and coughing. We washed after using play dough and paints, after playing outdoors, and sometimes after sitting on the floor.

Our enthusiasm grew. We began washing before using play dough or the water/sand table. Believe it or not, our play dough lasted for months! I guess without a daily dose of dirt and germs, it too was "healthier."

When children returned from using the toilet, I always called out a reminder, *"Did you wash?"* Soon children were reminding each other.

As another reminder, we traced children's hands on two posters. We hung one at children's eye level beside the sink and the other on the wall directly across from the toilet. Any child sitting on the toilet would see this reminder.

You can easily institute these activities in your classroom. Children as young as eighteen months can wash their hands with your help. For younger children, follow these guidelines and wash the child's hands for him. Be certain that all children in diapers (including infants) have their hands washed (by you) immediately after each diaper change. Guide children to develop a life-long habit that can help them (and you) stay healthy.



Recipe for Clean Hands

1. Wet hands completely under running water.

2. Put one squirt of liquid soap in your hand.

3. Rub hands together briskly. Spread the soap over fronts and backs of the hands, between the fingers, and over the lengths of the fingers, and across and under the fingernails.

4. Rub briskly, making "soap suds gloves" all over your hands and wrists. Keep rubbing while you sing your favorite song. (We sang nursery rhymes. This keeps the child scrubbing a little longer. The longer you scrub, the cleaner your hands will be. The experts recommend a minimum of 15 seconds.)

5. Hold hands under running water with your fingers pointing toward the drain. Rinse away all the soap.

6. Dry hands with a paper towel and THEN use the paper towel to protect your hands from the spigot while you turn off the water. (Help children understand that their hands were full of germs when they turned on the water. Some of those germs are still on the spigot and will come back onto their washed hands if they touch the spigot. The paper towel serves as a barrier.)

7. Throw paper towel in a trash can. (A covered can is best.)

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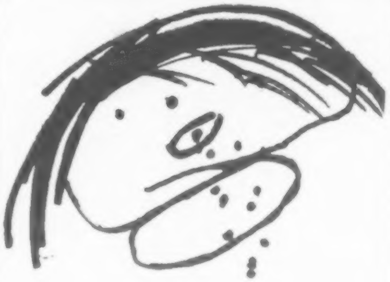
EXPLORING GERMS

by Susan Entz

Infection control is a major concern for early childhood professionals, but it is difficult to communicate its importance to young children. Because viruses and bacteria are invisible, preschoolers have a hard time understanding that sharing a toothbrush or sneezing into another child's face could cause illness.

Help the young children in your program become aware of the role of good personal hygiene in infection control by making the idea of germs concrete.

Build a mini-theme around the delightful children's book, *Those Mean, Nasty, Dirty, Downright Disgusting But....Invisible Germs* by Judith Rice (Redleaf Press).



"This is me spitting. The dots are germs."

art by Genevieve, age 5

☼ Teach children how to properly wash their hands, using antibacterial soap. Show them how long it takes to get rid of the germs by singing a full verse of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

☼ Enlarge pictures from the book to use for posters, puppets, headbands, or paper bag costumes to reenact the story. Then create little dramas based on real-life experiences at your school.

"Poor Juan was sick last week. One of those mean, nasty ,disgusting germs attacked him." (Have one of the children dressed as a germ give Juan a big bear hug.) *"Juan, how did that germ make you feel? What part of your body got sick?"*

☼ Put out colored play dough in the art center so children can create their own three-dimensional representations of germs. Take a photograph of these sculptures and display them.

☼ Have the group create their own big book on germs. Cut easel paper 11" X 17" and have children either draw or paint their own ideas of how a germ might look. Mount each picture on a sheet of construction paper (12" X 18"). Stack the pictures and then record each child's dictated comments on a second sheet of paper. Mount the comments on the opposite page. Bind the pages into a book.

☼ The group can play "germ tag." The child that is IT tries to tag an innocent child to infect it with its dreaded germs.

☼ Cooking activities are wonderful opportunities to reinforce newly learned ideas about personal hygiene. Discuss how important it is to clean our hands, clean the work surface, and then to use clean dishes and utensils. Once our materials are clean, we need to be sure that we don't contaminate our food by sneezing into it, or touching our hands to our eyes, ears, mouth, nose, or any other body part while we cook. If we do, it's off to the sink to wash up again!

☼ During the unit, discuss the proper way to blow noses and to cough, the importance of not sharing combs or toothbrushes with other children, and how to keep each child's naptime materials clean and in separate containers.

Train children to be vigilant germ fighters early in the school year. Show them how to wash their own cup and plate following snack, and how to spray the table or placemats with an antibacterial solution after each meal.

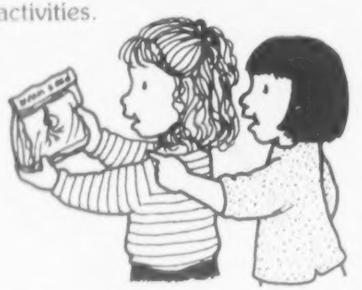
SPRING SENSES

by Leanne D. Grace

Spring is a time of awakening, *"that season of the year in which plants begin to grow after lying dormant all winter."* (Webster) Spring, like every season, brings its own distinct sights, sounds, aromas, and feelings.

In this fast-paced, video-oriented society, children often are not in tune with their natural surroundings. We need to awaken young children's sensory perceptions in order to help them grow in a healthy manner.

- Begin your celebration of Spring with a "Signs of Spring Show and Tell." Set aside a table, windowsill, or shelf to display the treasures children bring. Label each with the child's name and story of where it was found. The items can also be taped to large paper with children's names and stories creating a mural of the season.
- Use Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" to welcome each new time of year. Children can hold a piece of fabric, scarves, feathers, greens, leaves, flowers etc... and move to the music. Facilitate the creative movement by helping children to focus their listening to tempo changes. Narrate accompanying movements....BIG, small, slow, fast, in circles, high, low.
- Bring spring indoors by planting grass seed. Seeds can also be put in the water table to dump, pour, measure, and listen to. Bean seeds can also be planted in zip-locking bags so children can observe root systems and underground activities.



- Spring also brings the rain and with it lots of waterplay connected to art work. It's a good time to get out watercolors and do "washers." To make washers, have children use markers to make drawings. Then hang outdoors during the rain and observe the changes.
- Spring walks need to be at a leisurely pace to observe grass shoots, colors, and buds on trees and bushes. Children need to stop and close their eyes to hear the sounds around them. Take a clipboard to record observations. Give children magnifying glasses to investigate an area. Can you find three different colors? Two different greens? Something alive? Something that is not alive?

To culminate all these spring activities, have children use their words to help finish this song.

In spring (summer, fall, winter)
Above us we see...
Below us we see...
Before us we taste...
Behind us we hear...
All around us, we smell...
May we walk in...
May it be beautiful all around us.
In beauty it is finished.
(Adapted from a Navajo Prayer)

Helping children to be in tune with the cycles of nature and the rhythm of each season helps bring order and meaning into their personal lives. Facilitate children's discovery of their connection to nature, perhaps creating a new generation that will love and care for their surroundings.

LET'S GET GROWING

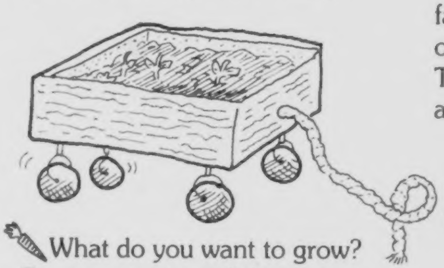
by Barbara Fischer

Spring floats in on a breeze gently waking the sleeping earth. Seeds stir, roots awaken, and bulbs poke their heads up announcing a new season. Be a part of this excitement by planting your own garden of vegetables and flowers. What better way to encourage healthy eating than by growing some of your own food? Try this garden of ideas across the curriculum.

PLAN YOUR GARDEN

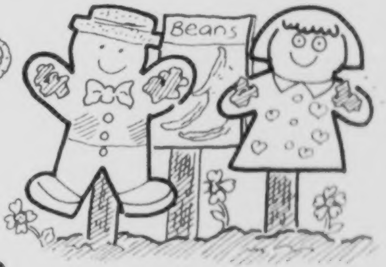
Pick a sunny spot in your yard. (Morning sun is preferable.) Use a trowel or shovel to turn over the soil; then use a rake to make the dirt smooth. Remove any rocks or hard material. Your garden area should be near a source of water—a hose or watering can. You and your children won't want to carry a heavy can of water too far.

No garden area available? Make a portable garden by constructing a large box to fill with dirt and plant your garden. Be sure to drill drainage holes in the bottom. Screw rolling casters on each corner of the box, add a chain or rope and you will be able to move your garden box anywhere easily.



What do you want to grow? Beans, carrots, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash are good choices and good eating, too. Corn is a wonderful crop to watch if you have enough room. Children may want to start their seeds indoors by planting them in dirt-filled foam egg cartons. Transplant the seedlings outside in your prepared garden. Seeds may also be planted directly into your garden area.

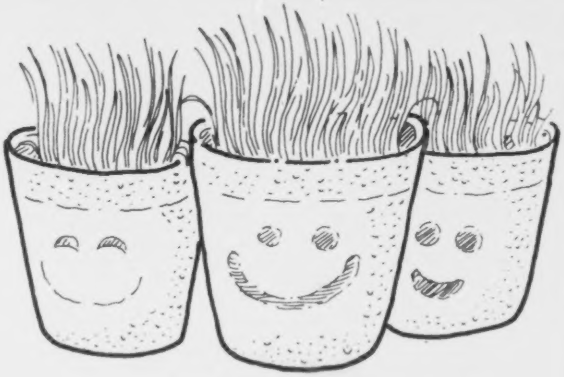
Map out your plants before planting. Tall growing plants (corn) should not shade low growing plants (squash). Make colorful markers so you will know where your plants are. Draw a picture of each vegetable or flower on a tongue depressor using permanent colored markers. Stick these into the ground near each group of plants. Add some scarecrows to discourage birds from feasting on your garden before you do. Cut boy and girl shapes from tagboard and glue to tongue depressors. Cut clothes from fabric scraps and glue to cardboard. Add a face and hat. Tape a few pieces of aluminum foil to the hands. The foil will sparkle in the sun and help keep the birds away.



While you wait for the growing, start a butterfly garden. Holly hocks, marigolds, and nasturtiums attract these dainty winged creatures. These flowers may be planted around the edge of your garden or in a place by themselves.

SPRING BASKETS

While you have your gardening gear out, start some spring baskets. Cut half-gallon milk cartons in half and poke drain holes in the bottom. Fill 2/3 of the way to the top with dirt. Place wheat berry seeds (Health food stores usually carry them) on top of the dirt. Sprinkle a handful of soil to cover berries. Water and set them in a sunny window in your classroom. Watch as the seeds sprout and



grow tall thick grass. Decorate the baskets.

Make a butterfly for your spring basket by pushing several pre-cut colored tissue paper squares through the open end of a straight wooden clothespin. Wind a pipe cleaner around the knob end for antenna. Add two black dots for eyes. Let your butterfly perch on the corner of the basket.

GROWING SCIENCE

Do plants need light? Plant an extra spring basket for this light experiment. Put this basket in a closet or other dark place. Water this basket when you water the others. Is there any difference? Help children record the progress of growth.

How do plants drink water? Demonstrate this by placing a stalk of celery in a cup of water. Add a few drops of food coloring and watch the colored water travel up the stalk.

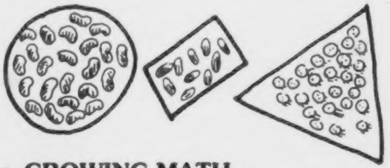
Where do seeds come from? Slice open oranges, apples, and lemons to show children the seeds inside that will grow another plant. Try placing an avocado seed in a cup of water. Let the large end just touch the water. Brace the seed with toothpicks. If kept in a sunny window, the avocado will crack open and a tiny plant will appear.

GROWING ART

Let Hairy Harry join in the fun. Give each child a foam cup to create a face on the side with markers. Punch a hole in the bottom, fill with dirt, and plant wheat berries. Soon the grass will grow and Harry will have a full head of hair! Let children use scissors to give Harry a haircut to keep him looking trim.

Create veggie placemats to use during harvest time. Slice an onion, green pepper, carrot and orange and place on paper towels to dry out overnight. Make a "stamp pad" by laying a folded paper towel in a meat tray. Pour a little liquid tempra paint into the tray and dip slices in paint. Print on colored construction paper. Cover with clear contact paper when dry.

Collect different-sized seeds to glue on tagboard squares, triangles, and circles to create collages. Encourage children to spread glue first before adding seeds in a design of their choice.



GROWING MATH

Classify seeds according to size, color, and variety. Include wheat berries, bulbs, avocado, orange and apple seeds to show the wide variation of seeds found in nature. Extend this activity to include vegetable identification.

GROWING MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Hap Palmer's "Growing Song" (Learning Basic Skills Through Music Volume 1 Educational Activities) is fun to sing along with during circle time. Dance with scarves to recreate wind and air movement; bend like a tree limb; wiggle fingers for rain and make a circle with arms for the sun. All are necessary for plants to grow.

GROWING BOOKS

Relax with growing books while you water, weed, and watch your garden grow.

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss (Harper & Row)

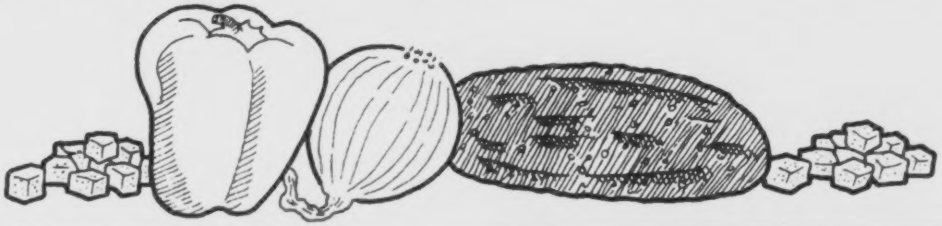
The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle (Crowell)

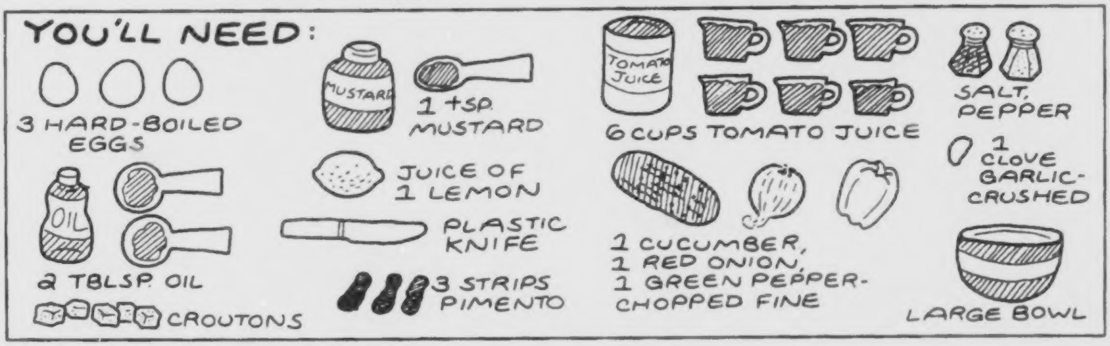
I'm a Seed by Jean Marzallo (Scholastic)

The Earth and I by Frank Asch (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich)

Watching a seed unfold to send a new plant into the world is a wondrous sight for young children. When you enjoy it with them, the experience becomes richer for all.

GARDEN SOUP





YOU'LL NEED:

- 3 HARD-BOILED EGGS
- 2 TBLSP. OIL
- CROUTONS
- 1 tsp. MUSTARD
- JUICE OF 1 LEMON
- PLASTIC KNIFE
- 3 STRIPS PIMENTO
- 6 CUPS TOMATO JUICE
- 1 CUCUMBER, 1 RED ONION, 1 GREEN PEPPER- CHOPPED FINE
- SALT, PEPPER
- 1 CLOVE GARLIC- CRUSHED
- LARGE BOWL

WHAT TO DO:

1. Remove yolks from eggs. Mash yolks with oil and garlic.

2. Add lemon juice and mustard.

3. Blend in the tomato juice with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Use plastic knife to chop the cucumber, red onion, green pepper and pimento.

5. Add chopped vegetables to soup.

6. Chill the soup and serve with croutons.

Taken from *Hands-On Cooking: Through the Seasons* by Kathy Faggella (First Teacher Press)

EXERCISE FOR GOOD HEALTH

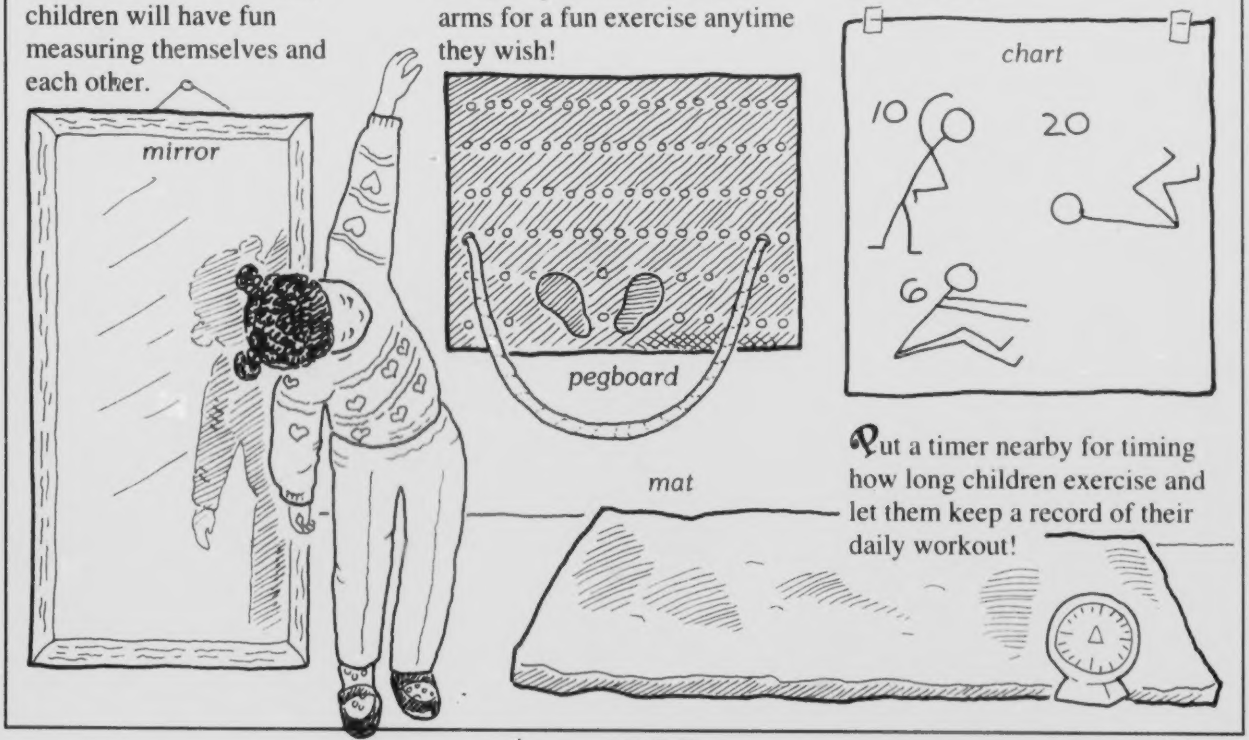
CREATE A FITNESS CENTER

A healthy spring is inevitable if your children can get fit with fun-filled activities in their own fitness center! Making the fitness center is almost as much fun as using it!

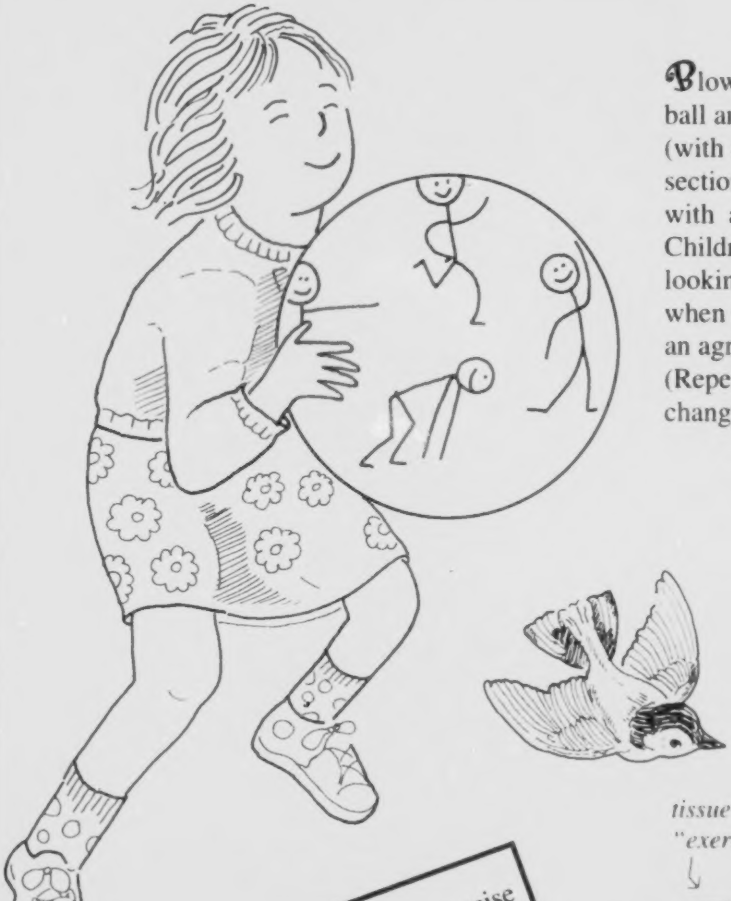
Choose an area near a full length mirror if you have one so that children can see themselves, check their posture, and admire their growth! If you took heights at the beginning of the year, post the chart next to the measuring station. By providing a pencil or chalk, children may be able to record their own heights for spring. Let them compare fall and spring heights. After a brief lesson on how to do each, children will have fun measuring themselves and each other.

If you have a cabinet with pegboard backing, turn the cabinet to have the back facing the fitness center. Put a 6-7 ft. nylon cord through two holes about 18 inches apart, twelve inches from the bottom. Have a child sit on the floor, facing the pegboard with her hands holding each end of the cord and her feet on the cabinet back. Trace around their feet with chalk for future foot placement. Children can then pull with alternate arms for a fun exercise anytime they wish!

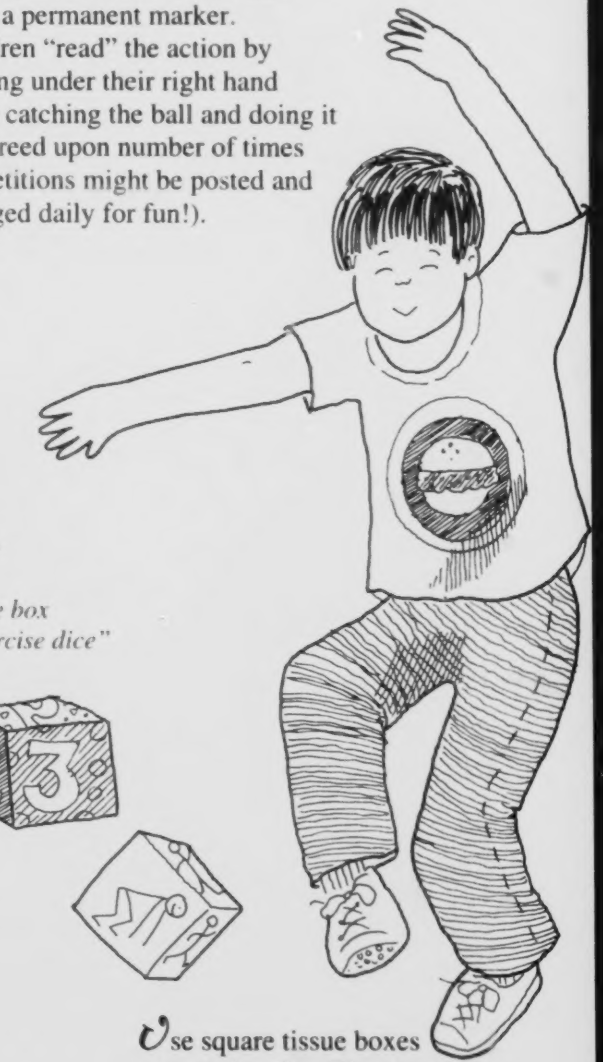
Put a mat on the floor for exercises children can "read" on a chart on the wall. Include pictures to "read" such as bicycling on their backs, sitting in a stride sit and touching toes, etc. Try to include the use of all body parts for a well-rounded workout. You can put numbers next to the picture for the number of times each exercise should be done or make a wheel to spin for repetitions for fun and interest.



Put a timer nearby for timing how long children exercise and let them keep a record of their daily workout!

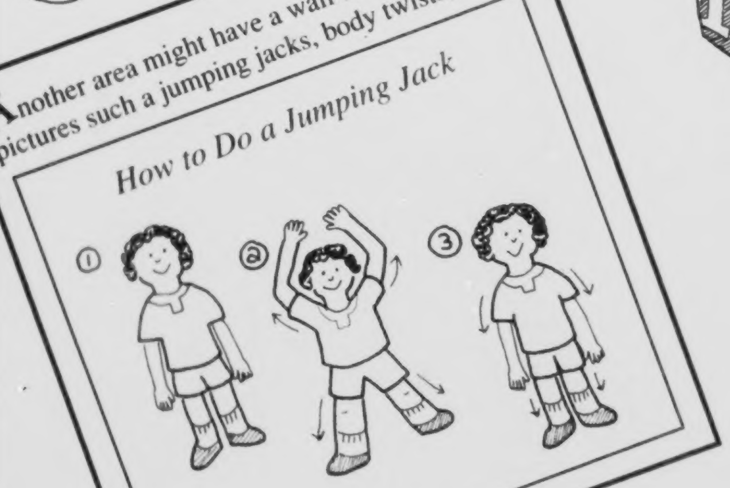


Blow up a small, plastic, beach ball and write movement ideas (with stick figure pictures) on sections marked off on the ball with a permanent marker. Children "read" the action by looking under their right hand when catching the ball and doing it an agreed upon number of times (Repetitions might be posted and changed daily for fun!).

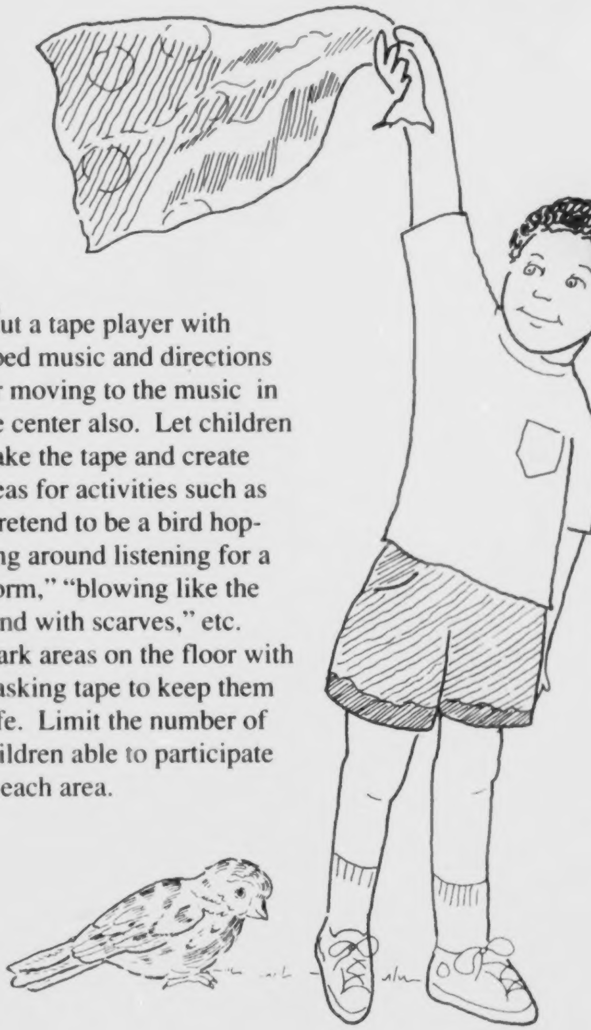


tissue box
"exercise dice"

Another area might have a wall chart of exercise pictures such a jumping jacks, body twists, etc.


How to Do a Jumping Jack
①
②
③

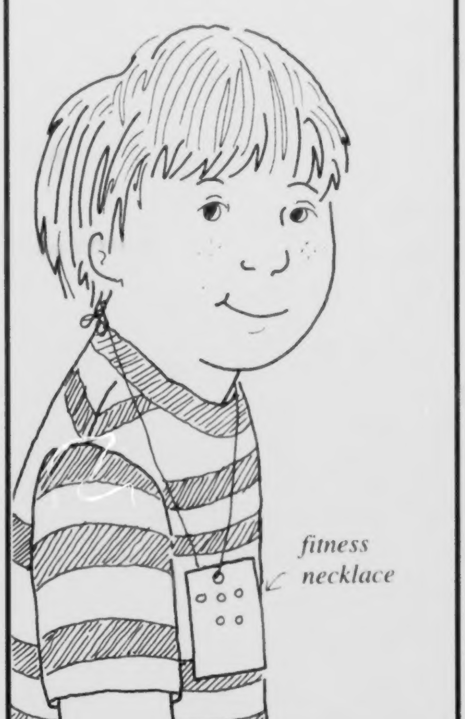
Use square tissue boxes as exercise dice. The exercise pictures could be on the six sides of one box and the number of times each exercise should be done on the six sides of another box. Rolling both boxes tells the child what exercise to do and how many times to do it.



Put a tape player with taped music and directions for moving to the music in the center also. Let children make the tape and create ideas for activities such as "pretend to be a bird hopping around listening for a worm," "blowing like the wind with scarves," etc. Mark areas on the floor with masking tape to keep them safe. Limit the number of children able to participate in each area.

The fitness center and activities can be set up outside as well with whatever playground equipment you have. By changing the "challenges" daily, children will be eager to see what's posted and be more motivated to "exercise." You may wish to let children make fitness necklaces, bracelets, or cards to be punched with a hole puncher when a certain activity is completed. They could then earn stickers for "fitness sticker books' for every five or ten holes punched! Who knows...it may be so much fun doing this, you may get fellow staff members to participate also!

Remember, relaxation is an important part of achieving good health. Let children make appointments for massages with each other with a pad, pencil, and telephone! (A great way to see if they can identify the names of ten body parts!)



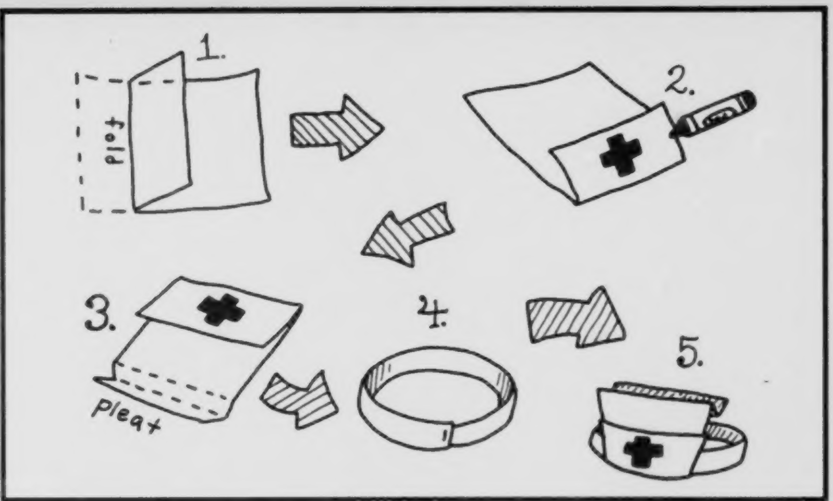
EXERCISE FOR GOOD HEALTH

EXERCISE DOS AND DON'TS

by Jean Stangl

Pre-schoolers should not exercise the same way as adults. They need a well-planned, regular exercise program, but ***not*** *the same exercises as adults. Here are some important* ***do's*** *and* ***don'ts*** *to keep in mind when you plan a fitness program for young children.*

- DON'T DO ATLAS TYPE EXERCISES, FEATS OF STRENGTH, OR HEAVY PUSHING AND PULLING. These exercises enlarge, stretch, and strain developing muscles and can cause permanent damage.
- DON'T DO EXERCISES THAT JERK, PULL, OR STRAIN THE MUSCLES OR LIGAMENTS. Slow, easy stretching and bending movements are best for the developing child.
- DON'T DO FORCED TOE TOUCHES WITH STIFF KNEES. This places too much strain on the lower back and the muscles and ligaments in the back of the legs. Have children flex their knees and bend forward (slowly), only as far as they comfortably can.
- DON'T DO VERY DEEP KNEE BENDS OR DUCK WALKS. They can do damage to the muscles and cartilage that support the knee, and cause later knee problems.
- DON'T DO LEG LIFTS WTH BOTH LEGS STRAIGHT. This tilts the pelvis forward and places strain on the lower back. Bend one knee and place the sole of the foot on the floor. Slowly, lift and lower the other leg.
- DON'T DO SITUPS WITH STIFF LEGS. This strains the lower back. Bend the knees, with feet flat on the floor, hands at the sides. Slowly roll up; slowly **roll** down.
- DON'T DO STRAIGHT LEG PUSHUPS. It will cause too much pressure and strain on the lower back. Have children rest on bent knees with feet facing upward.
- DON'T GIVE REWARDS. Make every child a winner. Offer positive reinforcement, both verbal and non-verbal. Praise the child for what she can do and build on her strengths.
- DO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT. When indoors, use a carpeted surface or mats. Exercise outdoors on the grass, when possible.
- DO ALLOW TIME FOR FREE MOVEMENT EXPLORATION. Children need to experiment with movement and they need time to freely practice new skills. When they can control how their body moves, it develops their coordination and self-confidence.
- DO ASK PARENTS TO HAVE CHILDREN WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHING AND SHOES. Exercising barefoot will provide added tactile awareness.
- DO PROVIDE A TIME FOR WARM-UP, EXERCISE, AND COOL-DOWN. Don't switch back and forth. Start out with slow stretches to prepare body; work up to active exercise and maintain for a few minutes. Then slowly bring back the body to normal.
- DO TRY TO BUILD ENDURANCE. Seventy-five percent of today's children cannot run-in-place for one minute. (Can you?) Set a timer for fifteen seconds the first day, and increase ten seconds each day.
- DO PRACTICE REVERSE DEEP BREATHING. Push out the stomach, as you inhale deeply; draw the stomach back toward the spine, as you exhale deeply. This allows the lungs to fill more fully and exercises the chest muscles.
- DO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT TASKS IN SEQUENCE. Start with the simple exercises and work up to the more complicated ones. Remember a child must be able to hop before she can skip.



HOSPITAL DAY

by Donna Bird

Hospital Day is a new holiday here in the United States. It has been observed in Britain for many years. The holiday occurs on May 12, which is the birthday of Florence Nightingale. She is the English nurse who, because of her dedication to the care of war victims during the Crimean War, is the founder of modern nursing.

Born in Florence, Italy, Florence Nightingale had only brief nursing training in the early 1850's. She was appointed supervisor of nursing at British army hospitals during the Crimean War. Her nursing care in Turkey and the Crimea revolutionized army medical care, greatly reduced mortality rates, and brought about strict sanitary and nursing standards. In 1860, she established a school for training nurses that became a model for modern nursing training. She wrote, "Notes on Matters Affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army," in 1858. In 1907, she became the first woman awarded the Order of Merit.

Before Florence Nightingale, most nursing was done at home as part of a woman's unpaid domestic duties. Hospital patients, mostly the poor and homeless, were attended by women in religious orders, or laywomen trained informally on the job. Conditions were unsanitary at best. With Florence Nightingale's example, nurses and thus hospitals in Britain, and our country as well, became the sanitary and hygienic places of healing we know today.

In the United States, Hospital Day is celebrated by communities showing their support of and appreciation for their hospitals. Your children can do this in a variety of ways.

▲ Schedule a visit to a local hospital for your class. There will usually be someone at the hospital who has had experience with children's groups. Keep things positive. The goal is to allay any fears children might have about hospitals.

▲ Your class might make simple gifts for those in the hospital, perhaps a children's ward. One gift could be a placemat for patients. Use a piece of colored construction paper for each placemat. Have your children cut out pictures of flowers from seed catalogs or other magazines and paste them onto the placemats for decorations. You might laminate the placemats, or cover them with clear contact paper to make them more durable.

▲ If a visit to a hospital is not possible, you could invite a nurse to your classroom. Have her tell children about her job and nursing in general. Let the nurse show children some of the instruments that she might use. Then have the nurse answer some of children's questions. It is always a good idea to have appropriate questions of your own ready in case children can't think of any.

▲ Another way to remember Hospital Day is by having each child make his own nurse's cap. Start with a sheet of white 8 1/2" X 11" paper. Plain copy paper will work. Make a 3 1/2" fold across the short side of the paper. This will be the front of the cap. Decorate it with a bright red cross, either with crayons or markers or colored paper. On the short end of the paper, fold a pleat about 1" wide. Cut a 2" strip of white paper large enough to go around the child's head, plus 1" to overlap and fasten into a circle. Attach the cap to this band, keeping the cap pieces on the outside of the band. These may encourage children to become nurses during dramatic play and care for all your dolls and stuffed animals!

HEALTHY SPRING COOKING

by Tania K. Cowling

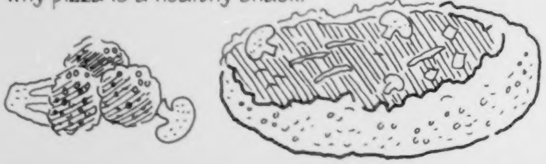
Kids love to cook. They like planning, stirring, sniffing, and tasting their creations. Cooking also gives children the opportunity to practice skills. Such learning tools are practiced and followed to reach a goal—nutritious and delicious food. If we take these skills across the curriculum, cooking experiences touch science, math, and even language arts. As a science, we observe how foods change through the cooking process. We predict what will happen when dry ingredients are moistened with wet or when raw foods are cooked. We compare different forms of the same food, like tasting fresh apples, applesauce, and apple butter. Looking at math concepts, we classify and sort foods by shape, color, size, and texture. The child learns to measure ingredients using classic measuring tools. Fractions are introduced as children divide snacks for sharing, learning that foods come in "wholes and parts." Language Arts play a fun part in the cooking curriculum. Kids love to write, talk, and share their cooking experiences. Vocabulary is emphasized by new words. Children also learn words from other cultures as they prepare ethnic foods. Create recipe charts that support independent cooking and photograph the children as they work through the steps of a cooking activity. Have children sequence these photos in order.

Be inventive with your cooking curriculum. Many projects can also include activities that relate to art, music, dramatic play, and social studies. Take apples for example; you can "bob" for apples, read The Legend of Johnny Appleseed, and so on.

On these pages you will find recipes to include in a "healthy and fun" spring cooking unit.

PERSONAL PIZZAS

Give each child half of an english muffin on a plate. Help him spoon a thin layer of tomato or pizza sauce on it. Ask children to sprinkle on some grated cheese and place mozzarella slices on the muffin. Have prepared chopped vegetables for them to add. Let children choose from peppers, mushrooms, broccoli pieces, etc. Place all the pizzas onto a baking sheet and bake in your oven until the cheese melts. While you're eating this snack, talk about the preparation, what choices of toppings the children made, did they like the pizza snack, and why pizza is a healthy snack.

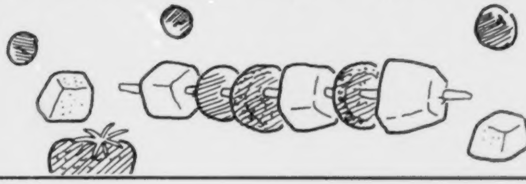


PRETTY POTATOES

Send a note home to parents asking them to please send in a potato (already baked) and a baggie full of a raw vegetable (chopped) that would taste good on a baked potato such as carrots, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, etc. Place these ingredients in your school refrigerator. When you are ready to cook, cut each potato in half, scooping out the potato "meat" into a bowl. Mash the potato with some milk to make it creamy. Let each child choose the vegetables she would like to include in the mixture. Spoon the mixture back into the potato shells and bake them in the oven to reheat. Enjoy this nutritous meal.

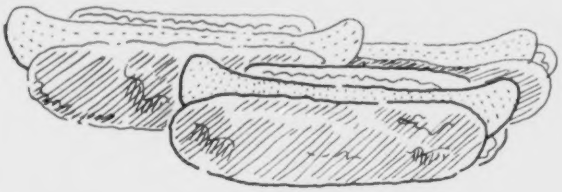
MELONS ON A STICK

Cut chunks of different melons and place them in separate bowls. Choose watermelon, cantelope, and honeydew melons. Using wooden kabob sticks, skew the melon chunks onto the sticks. You could even add a few berries for texture and taste variation. Have fun with strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries.



PEANUT BUTTER/ BANANA DOGS

Spread peanut butter and honey onto a hot dog bun. Peel a whole banana and place it into the bun for a unique snack time idea.

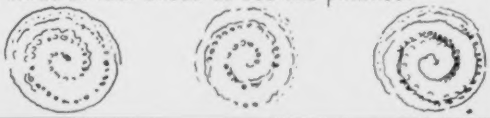


APPLESAUCE

Peel, core, and cut up fresh apples. Let children scoop up all the apple pieces and place them in a saucepan. Make sure you have at least one inch of water in the pan. Cook the apples until they are soft. Encourage children to notice the changes in texture and color. Smell the cooking apples and anticipate the wonderful taste when the applesauce is cooled. When the mixture is cool, let children take turns stirring the apples into sauce using a wooden spoon. Sprinkle on a little lemon juice and cinnamon.

PEANUT BUTTER PINWHEELS

Explain to your class that they will be making a special kind of sandwich that is swirled just like a pinwheel. Give each child a piece of crustless bread. Have each child take turns rolling his piece of bread flat with a rolling pin. Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on the slice. Next, select a jam and spread it lightly on top of the peanut butter. Demonstrate how to carefully roll the bread into a log. Cut three of four slices to see the pinwheel effect.



FRIENDSHIP SOUP

Before cooking day, gather children together to discuss the concept of making a friendship soup, one to which everyone makes a contribution. Discuss what kind of vegetables they want to include and send home notes to parents to please send in that particular vegetable with their child. That day, have children show their vegetable and do comparisons with the other vegetables. Set up the stockpot and have children help you fill the pot with either water or soup broth. Safely peel and chop the vegetables. As the soup slowly cooks, smell the aroma. Explain to children that the soup will simmer until all the vegetables are soft. Talk about the changes that are made in color and texture. Serve your friendship soup with bread or crackers at snacktime.

ARTISTIC FRENCH TOAST

French toast is easy to make and you can come up with many ideas of tasty toppings and maybe some unusual ones to decorate your slice. Some ideas have been raisins, trail mix, and fresh fruits, just to name a few. It's lots of fun to creatively decorate your slice and show your friends before eating it. This recipe serves two, so adjust it to fit the needs of your class:

What You'll Need: 2 eggs ◆1/2 cup milk ◆1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract ◆2 slices of bread (stale bread works best) ◆1 tablespoon or margarine ◆sprinkle of cinnamon

What to Do:

Crack the eggs into a large mixing bowl. Add the milk, vanilla, and cinnamon. Stir with a fork or whisk. Dip the bread slices into the mixture. ADULT melts the butter into a skillet and carefully browns the soaked bread on both sides. Place the slice on a plate and decorate it with all the toppings that have been provided.

TODDLER TIME

PICKY EATERS

by Jeannine Perez

Imagine ten children staring up at you with mutinous eyes while stubbornly refusing to even take a "thank-you" taste of nutritious food from their plate; and all ten are sitting at your table. Unfortunately, you are not a magician; coaxing, bribing, and arguing seems to do no good at all. Is there a better way to handle finicky eaters?

Toddlers learn their attitudes toward eating very early in life, and some of their likes and dislikes will remain with them throughout their lives. As teachers, we all realize how important it is to get children off to a good start and we encourage them to eat a variety of good foods. It is also common for most children to go through picky periods. Sometimes foods that are accepted at home are rejected when little ones are separated from familiar surroundings and schedules.

Manners are another issue at mealtimes, and some meals with children can resemble feeding time at the zoo. Toddlers are unfailingly honest about their likes and dislikes. After all, these little ones that we now teach are not far advanced from that time in their lives when they could simply toss anything they didn't like on the wall or floor or spit it all over the nearest adult!

Here are a few hints I've picked up through the years. These tips have helped me turn most snacks and meals into pleasant times and sometimes even into adventures for the children in my class. Our goals are to serve healthful foods, build good attitudes, also to make eating times fun for me.

SERVE SMALL PORTIONS TO SMALL CHILDREN

- Picky eaters can feel overwhelmed by mountains of food. Give them small portions or ask them to serve themselves family style. Children eat more when they can easily clean their plates and ask for more.
- Smaller plates and utensils also invite seconds. Try serving snacks or lunch on bread and butter plates to be eaten with fruit or demitasse spoons.
- Sandwiches that have been cut into bite-sized pieces, cut out with cookie cutters, or rolled like jelly rolls are inviting foods that beg to be tasted.
- Serve as many fruits and vegetables as possible—raw or steamed. Be aware of colors, smells, and textures. Children are. Appeal to all five senses.
- Try not to mix too many foods together (as in casseroles), but serve them separately. Most children do not trust foods stirred together.
- Try to serve meals and snacks at regular times. Encourage premeal routines. (*"First we put away our toys, next we wash our hands with soap, and then we may have time to sing that funny song about spaghetti before we sit at the table together."*)

MAKE EATING A PLEASANT EVENT

- Offer choices. Try smorgasbord snacks and meals that include a variety of bite-sized bits of cheeses, crackers, fruits, and vegetables, or sandwich materials such as peanut butter and other spreadables. Most toddlers have not had many chances to choose foods, much less fix their own sandwiches.
- A variation on this idea might be to prepare snacks in bags that you call "nibble" bags. Create your own trail mix for snack from raisins, dry cereals, tiny crackers, pretzels, and dried fruit.
- Serve meals and snacks occasionally on special paper party plates. (Get them on sale after holidays). Help children create their own placemats and then cover them with clear contact or have them laminated for permanence. I've found that personalized place mats are eye-

catching and also make sitting down for lunch or snack a smoother transition. Create new and different centerpieces for your tables.

- Invite children to join you outside for a picnic on a blanket. Serve finger foods in individual bags. Or plan a tea party with soft music, dress up clothes and finger sandwiches. Remind children that the good manners they've practiced work equally well in many different situations.
- Invite favorite puppets, dolls, or stuffed animal friends to join your children for a special lunch.
- Give favorite foods different and imaginative names. We've served Winnie the Pooh pancakes with honey, "sloppgetti" (spaghetti with lots of cheese), Barney (dinosaur) Bread, and Peter Rabbit Salads. The children came up with names...so naturally they ate the food!
- Serve foods in innovative ways. Make raisin faces on puddings or cereals. Drip pancake batter onto the griddle in strange shapes and decide together what those shapes are (as you eat the pancakes). Make rainbow bread by adding a little food coloring to several portions of bread dough.
- Link foods to songs and stories ("Runaway Gingerbread Man," "Three Bears," "Little Jack Horner").

INVOLVE TODDLERS IN PREPARING AND SERVING FOODS

- Use easy recipes and invite children to help in the preparation. Soups are always good projects. Children will eat vegetable soups even when they turn up their noses at most vegetables. Add different shaped pasta or alphabet noodles to the soup.

  It's easy to make individual loaves of bread or pizza crusts with frozen dough (less mess). Jello, pizzas, and muffins are also easily made.
- Use simple and creative cooking projects to meet cognitive (language, art, math, and science), social, and emotional objectives for your children. More plainly stated, cooking activities expand the vocabulary, allow children to predict, investigate, experiment, and even make messes, encourages cooperation and taking turns, and enhances a sense of pride, accomplishment and success.

INVOLVE PARENTS

- Keep parents informed about your cooking activities through newsletters and bulletin boards, and tasty samples sent home.
- Invite parents and grandparents to visit your class and supervise cooking partnerships that use their favorite family recipes.
- Plan a field trip to a restaurant that serves healthy foods and encourages family participation. Invite parents to accompany you there. Or take a field trip to a farm or produce section of a grocery store to learn more about the origin of fruits and vegetables.
- Ask parents to send copies of recipes for favorite family dishes and put them together in a special cookbook. Help your children illustrate each page and make copies of photos you have taken of children cooking. Be sure and date the cookbook...it will be a treasure for many years to come.

IN THE BOOK CORNER

BOOKS TO GROW ON

by Karel Kilimnik

Plants, insects, mammals, and even ordinary objects can help us observe growth and change. Just keep your eyes and minds open as you read about the following books.

📖 DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan has created a wonderful story in *City Green* (Morrow). Marcy lives in the city and daily passes by an empty lot on her block. In this purposefully integrated tale (weaving black and white, old and young, people with differing abilities in terms of movement) young Marcy teams up with her white haired friend Miss Rosa to turn the trash-strewn lot into a community garden.

We watch avidly as Marcy's neighbors organize themselves for this cooperative venture. We see Marcy's idea grow into a reality as we follow the characters through the steps to create a neighborhood gem. Even cynical Old Man Hammer gets involved.

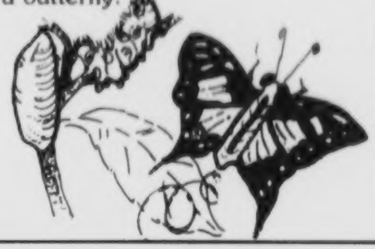
Not only is this a well-written and lovingly illustrated book, but Ms. DiSalvo-Ryan also includes specific information on how to start your own community garden. The book has a message, but it also tells a story. A portion of the author's royalties are being donated to the American Community Gardening Association.

📖 As a caterpillar addict I was immediately drawn to the next book, *Where Butterflies Grow* by Joanne Ryder (Puffin Unicorn Books). This is a good candidate for being made into a Big Book with Lynne Cherry's lushly detailed illustrations. The text and pictures flow together engaging your interest in the next stage of growth.

Two children gently lift a leaf to discover:

> *"...someone small*
> *hidden in a tiny egg*
> *growing bigger*
> *growing darker.*
> *...till one hot morning*
> *you burst your shell*
> *and creep*
> *into brightness."*

We follow the growth of an egg laid by a Black Swallowtail Butterfly. Each stage of growth is carefully detailed and described both in words and in pictures. We see the tiny larva hatch, eat, and grow—all from the perspective of a very small creature. It molts and becomes a pupa and eventually emerges as a butterfly.



Ryder provides information on raising these butterflies. Try it! It's fascinating to observe the growth and changes in the life cycle of a butterfly and can lead to further discussions on life cycles of other living creatures (including our own cycle).

📖 Allen Say's new book *Emma's Rug* (Houghton-Mifflin) shows a child growing and maturing. Her relationship to a rug (and to her own creativity) changes as she develops and gains an understanding of her own talent and ability.

When Emma is born, someone gives her a rug. Her mother *"laid it by the crib, for the day the baby could stand on her own feet."* Emma sits on this rug and carries it everywhere always careful not to step on it.

As she gets older, Emma draws and paints and begins to win prizes for her work. People would ask her where she gets her ideas and Emma would simply respond, *"I just copy,"* not alluding to the central role her rug played in her work. By now she kept her rug hidden in the bottom drawer of her bureau.

Emma's relationship with her rug changes as she grows. Calamity strikes one day when her mother washes the never-before cleaned rug. It shrivels and becomes ragged. Emma is despondent and gives up her art work. Eventually she comes to terms with the loss of the rug and finds inspiration in other places. She has outgrown her rug and its relationship to her art work.

Another way of charting growth is to look at the people around us and see how they change. *Grandpa Abe* by Marisabina Russo (Greenwillow) does just that.

When Sarah is born, her Grandma comes visiting with her new boyfriend, Abe. We watch as Sarah grows and their relationship develops into something very special. Over her nine years we actually see Grandpa Abe age. He dies and Sarah has to come to terms with her sorrow.

Children observe changes in adults around them all the time but often don't know how to articulate their observations and concerns. This book provides a way to talk about love and changes and loss that we all experience but may not know how to talk about.

My New Kitten by Joanne Cole (Morrow Junior Books) is a companion to *My New Puppy*. It is a precious photographic essay of a young Maine Coon kitten and her early life. There is a real impulse to reach into the book and grab a kitten to cuddle; you can almost hear the purring.

There are straightforward descriptions of the birth, feeding, and kittens learning how to use the litter box. Kitten development is well documented over a period of eight weeks. Read this and children will have a good idea of the growth of kittens. Maybe it will stimulate some homemade photography or drawing projects as pets are born (or adopted) and grow.

Ever wonder what happens when you sleep and store up energy for all that growing? *While You Sleep* by Julia Moore (Dutton Children's Books) is an imaginative compilation of life going on while you sleep: "skies glow; spiders sew."

Simple text with large colorful pictures makes it an easy book to read together. Use it as a starting point to create your own book about what happens when you sleep. Look at the rhyming words. Think about animals and their movements—develop descriptive word lists. Talk about sleep as an essential part of growth.

Use all or some of these books to describe and measure growth in your classroom. Explore the growth of children (both physically and emotionally), animals, insects, and/or plants.

STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

HEALTHY, HAPPY BOOKS

by Sandra L. Malcolm

Children's literature can be used to help children recognize healthy food choices. What they see and hear in a story will reinforce what they hear in a classroom discussion. The books selected for this issue address a variety of food choices. Helping children recognize healthy foods will add to their life-long knowledge and create healthier citizens. References are made to the Food Guide Pyramid as suggested by the US Department of Agriculture and the US Department of Health and Human Services. A large model of this pyramid would make an effective interactive bulletin board. A teacher resource book that could be used with this unit is *Cook with Me* by Lorelei Liddelow (Peguis Publishers).

EATING THE ALPHABET: FRUITS AND VEGETABLES A TO Z

by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), pictures unusual foods, as well as common foods, named according to their beginning alphabet letter.

BEFORE READING, sing the well-known ABC Song. Write each letter of the alphabet on the chalkboard. Tell children that we can sing the ABC's, then ask if we can eat the alphabet. Discuss the possibilities.

AFTER READING, point out that all of the foods were fruits and vegetables. Ask, *"Why is it important for us to eat fruits and vegetables?" "Where do fruits and vegetables fit into our food pyramid?"* Take another look at the pictures. Have children tell you how we get all these foods to eat.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Using a large map and fruit and vegetable "flags," locate where each food is grown (Information is in the Glossary in the book.) Look for areas where growing fruits and vegetables is common. Discuss reasons for this being the case.

◆ Set up a "food trading" experience to help children understand how we get foods that we cannot produce. Distribute play foods or empty packages to each child. Have them trade part of what they have for part of someone else's food. Continue until everyone has new food. Discuss what happened.

CLAMS ALL YEAR

by Maryann Cocca-Leffler (Boyds Mills Press) tells the story about a bumper crop of clams dug on a warm summer morning, providing a memorable feast all year long.

BEFORE READING, have a collection of seashells available. Discuss the shells—where they come from; what sea shells are; why we have sea shells. Discuss seafoods. If possible, have a sample tasting party of a variety of seafoods. Add pictures of seafood to the food pyramid. Discuss the importance of the "meat, poultry, fish" group to our good health.

AFTER READING, ask, *"Where are clams found and how did the children in the story know how to find them?" "What were all the different things they did with the clams?"*

ACTIVITIES

◆ Provide a plastic swimming pool full of sand. Bury clam shells or cardboard clams. Encourage children to walk in the sand barefoot and to dig for clams. Have them count the clams they find and record each day's total on a graph. Vary the number of clams buried each day.

◆ Find clam recipes similar to the ways the clams were prepared in the book. As a class, prepare and taste some of the clam dishes.

◆ As a class, make up a song about clam digging. Use a familiar tune such as "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

EXTRA CHEESE PLEASE!
MOZZARELLA'S JOURNEY FROM COW TO PIZZA

by Cris Peterson (Boyds Mills Press) is an easy-to-understand text and its accompanying photographs combine to vividly relate the story of how mozzarella cheese is made. This non-fiction picture book takes the reader through the process from cow to pizza.

BEFORE READING. Have a pizza party at storytime. Just before reading the story, serve each child a small piece of cheese pizza. Show a picture of a cow and a pizza. Ask, *"What do these two things have in common?"* Read the book to find out.

AFTER READING. explain to children that this kind of story is called non-fiction because it gives us facts or information about something. Other books that tell us a story but are not true are called fiction. Talk about the meaning of new words in the story (*udder, bacteria, pasteurize, rennet, curd, whey*). Have children tell you where they have heard the phrase, *"curds and whey."* Did children know what Little Miss Muffet was eating when they heard that nursery rhyme?

ACTIVITIES

◆ Emphasize the math concepts in the story. Help children to visualize 40,000 glasses of milk; 1,800 pizzas; or seven tons of feed mixture to give them a perspective for the importance of the cow to our lives.

◆ Go to a farm or a feed supply for a sample of hay, corn, and soybean meal. Blend these together to make the feed discussed in the book.

◆ Bring the supplies and directions for making cheese. As a class, make your own cheese. Have a tasting party when it is ready to eat. If you are unable to make cheese, make butter or ice cream which are other products made from milk.

◆ Using the recipe in the picture book, make pizza to be enjoyed as a snack or lunch.

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR (Putnam)
TODAY IS MONDAY (Philomel)

both by Eric Carle take the reader on a whimsical trip through the days of the week and a variety of foods. The illustrations are in tissue ppaper collage; an easily recognizable Eric Carle style.

BEFORE READING. ask children to say the days of the week. Ask, *"If we were to eat a special food each day what would it be?"* Write the days of the week and the responses on chart paper or the chalkboard. Read *Today is Monday.* Sing the "Today is Monday" song from the back of the book. Compare the foods suggested by the class for each day of the week to those in the book and song. Introduce the book , *The Very Hungry Caterpillar.* *"What foods do the children think the caterpillar will eat?"*

AFTER READING. ask. *"What foods did the caterpillar eat each day?" "Were they all good foods for a caterpillar?" "Why or why not?" "What happened to the caterpillar on Saturday night?" "Why did that happen?" "How did he make himself feel better?" "What happened to the caterpillar at the end of the story?" "Do you think these stories are true or make-believe?" "Why?"*

ACTIVITIES

◆Sing the 'Today is Monday' song. Make up new food verses, substituting foods chosen by the children.

◆Add the foods talked about in each story to the food pyramid. Discuss where foods such as lollipops and cupcakes fit into our eating plan.

◆Retell *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* using a sock puppet as the caterpillar. Have children "feed" the various foods to the sock caterpillar.

◆Help the caterpillar select a balanced diet for Saturday. Have children draw picture of healthy choices on a paper plate. Add a picture of the caterpillar on the edge of the plate or encourage children to make one from construction paper to glue onto the plate.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS FOR CHILDREN

by Sherry Burrell

Two-year-old Chris grabs the dump truck away from Richard. Three-year-old Sam stomps right through the block building that a small group of children had built. Four-year-old Pat strokes another child's velour sweater, and that child turns and punches her in response. Five-year-old Randy repeatedly asks another child for a turn on the tricycle, then finally starts crying. These are typical daily scenes in just about every early childhood program. Young children like being with one another, but they don't yet have the basic social skills they need to help them avoid upsetting or aggravating others. Fortunately, children learn very quickly. If we offer some simple role-playing lessons, and set up some clear consequences for inappropriate behavior, we can begin to create "healthy relationships" very early.

The main goal in teaching healthy relationships is to help children begin to learn to respect other's rights as they become sensitive to the messages their own bodies are sending out to others. There are several skills that might help this process.

EYE CONTACT

Young children use their eyes in many different ways. Some have the habit of staring at whatever interests them, while others haven't yet learned to rest their eyes on anything or anyone for more than a millisecond. Practice "eye contact"! Play games that challenge children to track moving objects with their eyes, starting with large objects, and then using smaller ones. Next, ask children to look right into an adult's eyes as that adult moves from side to side, and back and forth in front of them. Help children understand that this game is not a game that invites "staring," but rather encourages normal blinking reflexes while still keeping the eyes focused on one person. Eventually the game advances to the stage in which two children are partners, and are challenged to work together to see how long they can maintain eye contact with one another (while staying still). Using a timer makes the game more exciting and encourages children to increase their "eye contact" time! The final stage in the game, is setting up an activity in which the partners are telling one another stories they know, or are just talking about a given topic. The goal is to have both partners working hard to keep good "eye contact" going throughout the "game"!

As children become better and better at this game, begin to help them to transfer this developing skill into real life use. Encourage eye contact while children are naturally talking and playing together. Notice and remark about any improvements in this area. Remind children that "staring" is not the goal! Using good eye contact helps friends know that we are interested in them, and that we are trying to listen to them! It shows that we care. If you model this very important skill, you will be much more effective at teaching it!

VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE

The second concept in developing healthy relationships involves the child's voice and her body language. Young children have not yet developed an understanding of what signals they might be sending out with their tone of voice or with the positions of their bodies when they speak to others. Games that help children begin to notice and recognize these signals will give them a head start at becoming more considerate in their own responses.

Begin by being an actor or actress yourself! During group time each day, try saying, *"Good morning,"* in several different ways. Use different tones of voice, change the expression on your face, and use "body language" to show children how the same words can give very different messages! Ask them which way made them feel the best; then have the whole group practice saying "Good morning" in that same way!

At other times, use other phrases in different ways, and ask children what they think the person saying it really meant. Try phrases such as: *"I'm sorry," "Please give me that," "I'm using this now,"* or *"May I play with you?"* It won't take long for children to realize that tone of voice, facial expression, and body language make a big difference!

At first, the adults will probably be the main actors, but soon you'll have lots of volunteers to try acting out different phrases in different ways. Once children become familiar with this game, it is fun to use it as they act out stories they know. For example, try challenging children to act out stories they know. Try "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," having the actors say their parts as if they were very angry, very shy, very happy, or very sad. This game teaches children to begin to label, define, and express their feelings.

FACE AND SPACE

Another concept that helps children understand healthy relationships is the idea that a person's face or body needs a certain amount of "personal space" around it that shouldn't be "invaded" by anyone. Young children can relate to "mine" very well. They are very young when they begin to call something in their own hand "mine." Teaching them that their face and body are "theirs," and that other people's faces and bodies are "theirs," can go a long way toward teaching them respect for both themselves and for others.

One game that is fun to play involves giving everyone a cardboard paper towel tube. Have each child hold one end of the tube tightly against her chest, and challenge children to walk around in a specified area without letting their tube get close enough to touch anyone else's tube. Start by having just two children at a time try it (in a fairly small space), then gradually add more children to the space. Encourage children to notice how difficult it can become to avoid invading other people's space when it gets more and more crowded.

As a variation of this game, have two children holding the tubes walk toward each other, and try to stop before their tubes touch. The object is to get as close as possible without their tubes touching each other. Another game involves having two partners walk toward each other, but one of them has a small clay or foil ball loose inside the cardboard tube that is held tightly against her chest. As one child walks toward the other, both children stop just as their tubes meet, and they attempt to transfer the ball from one tube to the other, then turn and walk back to their own starting line. It's fun to keep switching partners to keep this game going.

All of these activities serve more than one purpose. For young children, games are valuable just for the fun of playing. But each of the activities described here also offers children an experience that might raise their awareness of their own and other people's feelings and rights. Each activity is designed as a lesson that might help children develop some basic social skills to lead them toward healthier relationships. After some practice, those "typical daily scenes" might change until they become more socially acceptable!

LIGHTEN UP... STOP TEACHER BURNOUT

by Jeannine Perez

Recently I watched a TV commercial about a man under unbelieveable stress. Everything went wrong for him. The scenes I watched were too accurate for comfort, and reminded me of Judith Viorst's book, *Alexander and the Terrible No-Good, Very Bad Day* (Western). I realize that everyone has an occasional day when nothing turns out right. It's when those terrible days stack up that teacher burnout becomes a real danger.

Are you in danger of burnout? What are some signals of an approaching burnout? Some common syptoms include grouchiness, fatigue, trouble getting to sleep or trouble getting up, eating too little or too much, and the feeling that nothing ever goes right, so *"...what's the use anyway?"*

What can you do about teacher burnout? Try some or all of these tips to put a spring back in your step and light in your life!

- **Laugh often!** Find a funny quote and make it your motto for the day, sing silly songs with your children, or listen to and collect the corny "knock, knock" jokes that all children know and delight in sharing. If you can laugh at your own mistakes, they'll fade away.

- **Do something (anything) new.** Try new ideas, even if you don't think you will like all of them. If your routine is always done in a certain way—change it! You can always return to your original schedule if the change does not work out. Changes don't have to be major ones. Drive (or walk) to your center on a new route. Do something different on your break. Speak to a stranger. Eat a food you've never tried before.

- **Exercise regularly.** This is probably my most important tip and should be starred and underlined! When I am most stressed and burnt out, and feel like simply sinking into a soft chair, glowering at anyone that gets in my way, and vegetating till bedtime, it is time to move! I am still amazed at the differences in the way I feel (and think) after a long walk, jog, or swim. If you think you do not have time for regular exercise, get up fifteen minutes earlier, or work stretching or aerobic exercises into your circle time activities with children.

- **Create a pleasing work environment.** Look at your room as though you've never seen it before. (Usually we do not really see what has been in the same place more than a week.) Rearrange some of your furniture or equipment, declutter, take down old pictures and pull the dead leaves off a wilting plant. Then try and see the room through children 's eyes and simplify. Now add brightly colored accents, a new plant or two, and a few prints that please you. Behind my desk, I have two prints (at this time). One is a Mary Englebriet poster of a girl with hands defiantly akimbo on her hips and wearing a scowl. It is captioned *Snap out of it!* The other print is a small picture of a waterfall. Some days one print may be more appropriate than the other, depending upon whether I most need shaking up or calming down. Your workplace is the space in which you spend many hours of your life, and you

(and the children) deserve a beautiful environment.

- **Plan and organize.** Don't try to turn around your life and routine in one full swoop, but do so little by little. First you might do the obvious things to make your life more efficient, like setting out the outfit you're going to wear the next day before going to sleep, and searching out materials and storybooks you will need the following day before closing the door to your classroom each afternoon. Go even further, and try to visualize the day ahead of you. Sometimes I do this while exercising, but find my best time to preview the coming day is just before going to sleep or in that dream stage when you are not asleep, yet now quite awake. Everything seems to fall into place then, and small details or creative ideas that will enhance what is planned seem to pop into my head like the flash of light bulbs. These few minutes of planning are usually my most creative ones.
- **Team up and swap some of your jobs.** If you are lucky, another teacher may even relish taking over some tasks that you dread. For example, a neighboring teacher and I usually combine our classes once or twice a week. When both classes are in my room, I tell a story (sometimes with puppets), or do an art project. The other teacher may also visit us, or she sometimes uses that time as planning or putting away time. In her room, the children and I learn Spanish phrases and put them into songs and fingerplays.
- **Keep a journal to help you see the wider picture and get a better perspective.** Reading weeks later about a temper tantrum (particulary one by a parent) is more interesting and less traumatic when seen in the bigger scheme of things. Your journal can also give you a sense of behavior patterns or causes for reccuring problems. Unbelievable as it seems, rereading the journal in a few years will make you long for the child that can make you pull out your hair now.
- Where is that masking tape? **Don't sweat the small things.** Save your energies for emergencies. I once read that the worst possible waste of time are the minutes (or hours) used searching for something you've misplaced. I try to have a specific place for small often-used items (like keys), but they do still occasionally get lost! Planning ahead and making or buying duplicates help relieve immediate needs, and usually the item in question turns up more quickly if you aren't searching frantically for it. If all else fails, and the item lost is immediately necessary (like car keys), enlist the help of the small eagle-eyed detectives around you. Make it a game, or offer a small reward, and in all likelihood you'll come up with the lost item.
- **Be good to yourself.** Remember that you deserve it! It's impossible to give your best to others if you're always depriving yourself. Reward yourself often. It could be a cup of herbal tea, a new plant or flowers, massage therapy, or (not too often) a hot fudge sundae! The classical music I play during naptime quiets little ones and familiarizes them to music beyond "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and it also soothes me.
- **Be good to others.** Surprisingly enough, the Golden Rule is still relevent to our society. Often, the very act of becoming more aware of other's problems is enough to make our own problems seem somewhat insignificant.
- **Take time to smell the roses, and find joy in small successes.** Value yourself and the job you are doing. Take a good look at the impact you have on the children in your class. What more important job could you possibly find?

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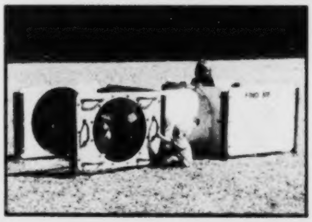

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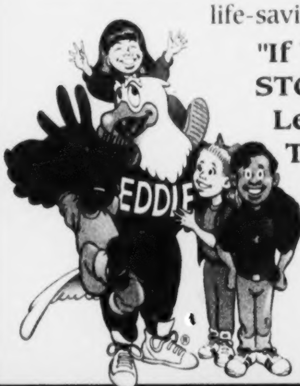

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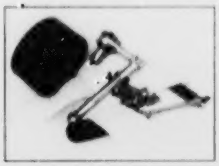

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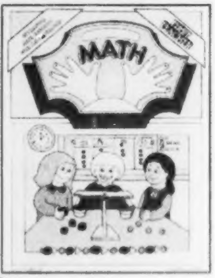

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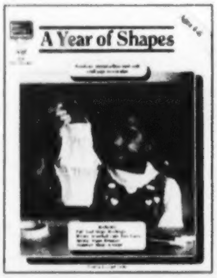

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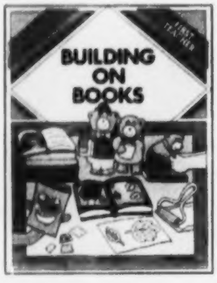

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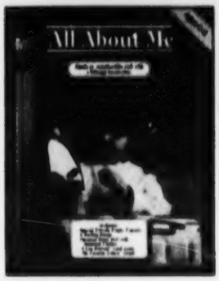

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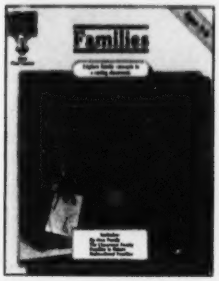

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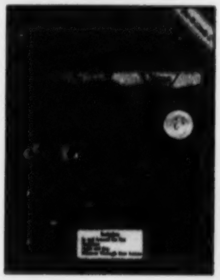

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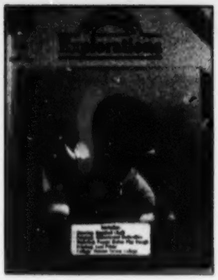

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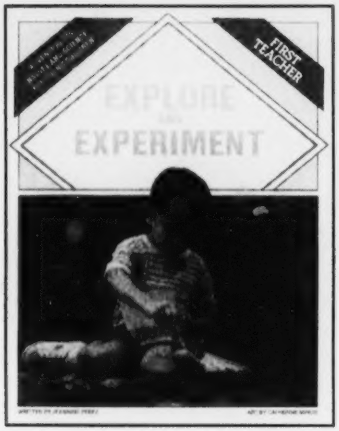

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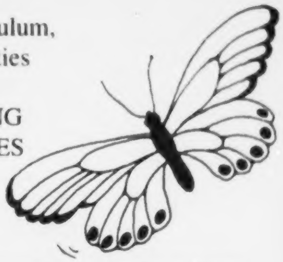

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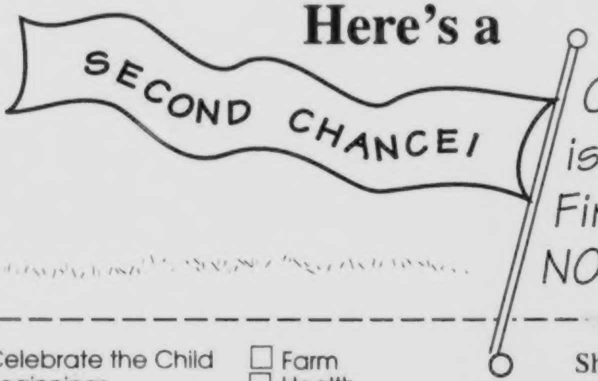
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

According to one dictionary, *messy* can mean untidy, dirty, or in confusion. But for young children, *messy* brings to mind free exploration and play with interesting materials that to adults can seem icky, and even filthy—perfect summer pastimes.

Messy materials such as sand, mud, dirt, doughs, and paints all stimulate the senses—and the imagination and creativity of young children. In this issue of *First Teacher*, we will explore all the aspects of messy play. First you will learn how to organize the "messy areas" of your classroom—from flooring to traffics patterns and display ideas. Karen Stephens even tells you how to create "messy play kits" in this article.

Many of the articles in this issue deal with making and using specific messy materials. Toddler Time explores different ways that your littlest children can learn with sand. There are ideas for making sandboxes and how to encourage sand play indoors and outside—games, science experiments, and art projects that toddlers will love.

From sand, you'll move to play doughs. There are recipes for four different kinds of doughs in the article. If children enjoy exploring play dough, they'll love the recipes for soft pretzels and Bread Dough Sculptures in "Squish, Roll, Pat and Stir."

After children experience the wonderful textures of doughs, they're ready to have fun with dirt. Susan Entz shows you how to mess around in the dirt of a summer garden. If you mix a little water with that dirt and what do you get? MUD! In "Mud-Licious Learning," you'll find books about mud, science, art, and language activities—and even how to make a "clean mud mixture."

Messy is the perfect adjective to go with creativity when we speak of young children. There are lots of ideas for art experiences in this issue with the emphasis on interesting materials—fingerpaints, watercolors, "goop," plaster of Paris. And while children are doing art, Mary Beth Spann Minucci tells you how to help them develop vocabulary and language skills.

Of course, these messy ideas would be a disaster without good cleanup tips. They appear in almost all articles: outdoor cleanup stations and teams, cover ups, games to get rid of sand, and a cleansing powder recipe that young children can use safely. So enjoy the summer and the opportunities for messy learning.

WELCOME
to the newest
member of the
First Teacher
family!

Andrew Elliott Miller
6 Lb. 9 oz.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paula Gaj Sitarz, a former Children's Librarian, is now a freelance writer and storyteller. Her newest book, *Story Time Sampler*, published by Libraries Unlimited, is a terrific resource for early childhood teachers and librarians. It includes read-alouds, booktales, poetry, songs, and follow-up activities. Sitarz presents 21 topics and themes from birds to cooking to magic. Every category offers an annotated bibliography.

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HELPFUL HINTS

PLAN AHEAD FOR SUMMER FUN

by Gail P. Jones

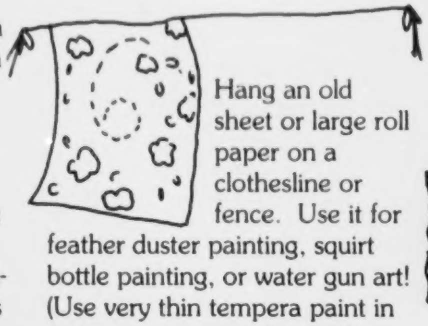
Summer time is the best time for messy play if you plan ahead! Make certain you have a safe place, enough materials, and everything needed so you won't "have to go back for something else."

Plan for cleanup when you set up, or the "messy fun" may turn into 'messy frazzle"! Cleanup time can be just as much fun as the actual activity if you add songs and a few creative ideas! Line up dump trucks ready to carry supplies back inside. It's more fun than asking children to stop what they're doing, pick it up, and carry it inside. Always end an activity *before* enthusiasm dies! Clean up *Formica*-type table tops by fingerpainting with non-mentholated shaving cream for a refreshing experience!

Do the messy play with positive admonitions to encourage participation. Teachers can turn off the most inquisitive child with a negative statement such as *" Ooh, that's disgusting looking!"*

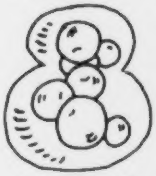
Practice with new materials before giving them to children. If you haven't used a material before, sample it beforehand. You may come up with lots of creative ideas on your own!

Make a nature sculpture and clean up the outside play area at the same time! Mix two cups of flour with one cup each of salt and water. Knead it and place it on a piece of cardboard, wood, or rubber tile. Look for "nature finds" and add them to the sculpture. Let it harden in a dry area for two or three days.



Hang an old sheet or large roll paper on a clothesline or fence. Use it for feather duster painting, squirt bottle painting, or water gun art! (Use very thin tempera paint in waterguns or spray bottles.) Turn on a tape of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for a movement experience as well.

If you have a sand area, make sure it is covered when not in use for health and safety. Add surprise toys and utensils on a regular basis for motivating new ideas. However, toys should be *next* to the sandbox, not dumped into it. Make sure you have water available for use with the sand.



At the beginning of the summer session , you may wish to create an outdoor cleanup station (with supplies, tubs for washing, etc.), supply area, and display "museum."

Don't forget the "mud pie" center! Include boards or areas for drying, tools for creative role-playing and, perhaps, a camera for retaining memories of great works of art.

Bring back memories of winter with "snow paint." (Combine one cup of soap powder with 1/3 cup of liquid starch and 1/4 cup of water in a bowl, whisking until thick.) Paint with it on dark paper.

DUPLICATE FOR PARENTS

LEARNING CAN BE MESSY

by Sherry Burrell

Wouldn't it be easy if learning were neat and orderly? If it were, we would know exactly what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it. All children would learn the same things at the same times. Parents and teachers would always agree about every child's developmental level, and raising a child or teaching him would become somewhat mechanical. In this technological age, computers could effectively take over the dissemination of the correct information at the correct time in every child's life. But what would happen to the magic of learning (and teaching)?

Fortunately, learning is not very neat and orderly at all. Children don't always learn things in sequential ways or at specific ages. Learning happens when children's thinking skills, developmental levels, experiential levels, and opportunities all combine to create an "ah-ha" response. Some "ah-ha's" are tiny and some are life-changing. The one thing they all have in common is that they are spontaneous and unpredictable.

EARLY SENSORY EXPERIENCES

It's up to the adults in a child's life to provide a constant flow of rich and varied sources of information. By stimulating all the senses on a regular basis, both alone and in various combinations, caring and supportive adults set the stage for the "ah-ha" responses to occur.

- **Auditory input (through the ears)** It's never too early to talk to a child, sing to him, or recite simple poems and rhymes. Play with your voice by making it higher or lower, softer or louder, and faster or slower. Expose children to every style of music, and use a tape recorder to tape a child's own voice from the babbling stage on, and play it back to her. Record your own voice and play that back for the child in your absence. Find items around the classroom to "play" with children to discover what sounds they make. When you're out in the world with a child, listen! Notice what sounds children might be focusing on, and take the time to find the source of some of those sounds together. Put names to the sounds! Stimulate the ears!
- **Visual input (through the eyes)** From the first day of a child's life, show things to her. When you accompany a young child around in the world, take the time to slow down and really SEE what's there! Allow children a few moments to savor the colors, patterns, shadings of dark/light, sizes, or designs in wallpaper, the side of a building, the reflection off a window, a floor or rug design...anything! Provide lots of visual stimulation in a child's daily life.
- **Kinesthetic input (through**

body movement) Children need to move through the world in order to learn from it. Slow down, and move at a child's pace. Try to see what he is seeing, try to hear what he is hearing, and try to imagine what it must feel like to move your body the way he is moving his body. Exercise with children! Check with your local recreation services, or just get down on the floor and gently move your legs then the child's legs, your arms, then the child's arms, etc. Movement is learning for young children!

- **Input by other senses (through taste, smell, touch, etc.)** Anyone who has ever met a baby knows that everything gets tasted! The world provides a richness when the adult consciously offers many different but appropriate taste sensations, one at a time. But be careful to just offer, never force! Children who are offered a wide variety of interesting foods over a long period of time will develop a healthy range of food preferences. It is perfectly normal for children to get "stuck" on one or two foods for a while, but over time their tastes will change if no power struggle occurs because of it. Children, who become "finicky," are often those for whom food has become a power struggle because of a parent who pushes. When parents show joy over foods that have many different "smells and tastes," children often show delight as well!

The sense of touch is also important to the child's development. When we think of children, we usually think of soft, silky textiles. But children might also enjoy experiencing the way other things feel as well! Look around you and discover what the world offers to the sense of touch! Find things that are cold, wet, slippery, rough, slimy, hard, squishy, very warm (not hot!), scratchy, bumpy, lumpy, hairy, furry, muddy... If you show enjoyment at the wide range of "touches" the world has to offer, your child will learn a healthy curiosity for different textures, and this will become one more tool for learning.

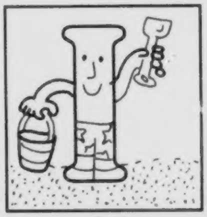
- **Set the Stage and Have Fun** There's a wonderful children's book called *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Krause (Windmill). In it the child, Leo (a tiger), seems to be developing at a slower rate than his fellow tiger friends. His father is worried and a little anxious, and wonders when Leo will "bloom." Leo's friends seem to be learning lots of new things, but not Leo. In the story, Leo's mother has faith that her son will learn *"in his own good time,"* and he does!

The lesson of the story is a simple one to hear, but a very difficult one to live. All parents want what is best for their children. If we were convinced that our children would develop "in their own good time," we wouldn't feel the need to push them. If we were taught that they would "bloom" someday, we could calmly enjoy them today, and not worry so much about their futures. If we could just have the faith that Leo's mother had, we would love our children just as they are, and we would give them all the time they need to become themselves.

While we're waiting, parents who want to contribute to enriching the "stage" for their children can consciously slow themselves down and enjoy all the wonderfully stimulating sensations that the world has to offer! When a child is given the gift of time, when a parent slows down to the child's pace and "smells the roses" (or gets into the mud) with him, the shared "ah-ha's" become magical, and learning happens! It may not be very orderly, but sometimes messy is best!

THE IMPORTANCE OF MESSY PLAY

by Karen Stephens



I want you to relax a minute. Close your eyes. Drift back to your childhood. Think of a warm, sunny day. Breezes caressing your cheeks. Toes are free of the confines of socks and shoes. Think back to days when you could play and play and play.

What was your favorite activity? What was so much fun you didn't want to go inside for snack, lunch, nap, or supper? I bet it was something that was very hands-on, actively engaging, often sticky and wet....and very messy.

Perhaps it was playing in the sprinkler—splashing and giggling to your heart's delight. Or maybe you remember a favorite spot by a riverbed, ankle deep in mud, shoveling out canals with opened clam shells.

If you were like me, you could have been in the ditch along the road, filling old pie tins with dirt, never forgetting the finishing touch: sprinkling "brown sugar" sand on top.

Sand is the messy stuff that childhood is made of. Touch-me stuff. Mold-me stuff. Change-me-into-a-million-different-things stuff. And therein lies the benefits.

Upon first glance, the most obvious benefits of messy play include fine and large motor development. Painting and playing with play dough allow children to exercise fine muscles. They learn to coordinate eye and hand, sometimes to create by whim, sometimes to create by a plan with an end goal in mind. Large motor development is strengthened when children dig in sand, mud, or dirt. Large muscle groups are also included in pouring and stirring activities inherent in sand and water play.

Children need sensory experiences to stimulate complex thought, the more varied the better. To mature and be able to create and manage detailed concepts, **intellectual development** needs nudging throughout childhood. Sensory experiences do the trick! "Hands-on" play materials literally feed children's brains.

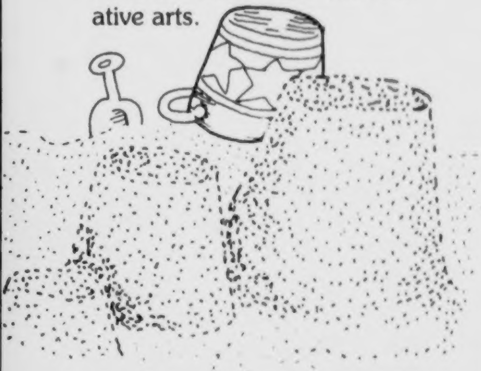
As the brain is "fed," imagination is allowed to flourish. Imagination and creativity are hard to jump start later in life. By nurturing the senses in the early years—through sight, sound, and touch—concepts can grow, develop, and become refined. Creativity and imagination is just one of the wonderful by-products.

Delight in sensory experiences motivates children to learn about the infinite possibilities in the world around them. It encourages them to exercise their curiosity. And while following their curiosity, they'll learn basic principles that apply to life.

For instance, principles of science, such as cause and effect, can be explored.

- *"What will happen if I mix red fingerpaint with yellow?"*
- *"What happens if I squeeze a sponge under water?"*
- *"What happens when I use a rolling pin with play dough?"*

Math concepts can be explored as children work with clay, mud, or sand. To create the perfect packing and modeling consistency, ratios of water to material can be explored. Shapes and sizes can be manipulated. Measurement of volume takes place in sand and water tables. Sorting, grouping, and patterning are all processes inherent in playing with "messy" materials associated with creative arts.



Sensory experiences help children learn how to problem solve. Children wanting to build mountains, valleys, and canals in the sand box must learn about mixing sand, packing sand, and how to use various digging tools. Children, wanting to grow vegetables, must learn how to work with soil and how deep to plant seeds so they'll root and thrive.

Sensory experiences provide a rich foundation from which a lively vocabulary can grow. In fact, communication of all kinds benefits from sensory play. As children engage in activities that delight the senses, they have reason to use a variety of words to describe their discoveries! And they have reason to WANT to communicate their thoughts, ideas and desires.

This past summer grounds workers placed shredded tires under our play yard's climbing equipment. As a thank you, the children drew pictures and wrote a card describing how wonderful they thought the bed of shredded tires was to play in. The grounds crew was enchanted to read that children thought the tires were *"squishy, squooshy, cushy, springy, and bouncy."*

And don't think "messy play" just furthers intellectual development. **Social development** is encouraged, too. Children explore together and plan together. They work cooperatively when making creations out of basic sensory materials, such as sand, clay or water.

Emotional development gets into the act, too! From birth, most children are soothed when their senses are catered to. Colors dazzle them. Tastes encourage them. The touch of a gentle hand conveys security. Repetitive touch calms them. No wonder children find play with dough, sand, water, and fingerpaint so enjoyable! You've heard of "comfort food." Well, messy materials allow for "comfort play."

When all is said and done, hands-on messy experiences allow children to explore the human body. It helps them appreciate all the fascinating capabilities it holds. It can see smell, touch, hear, and taste. It can gather information at the speed of light. Even more miraculously, the brain can process and make sense out of the information. It makes life an adventure.

And that's probably what's most important about "messy" sensory play. It's fun. It's engaging. It thrills. It amazes. It makes kids glad to be alive. It builds self esteem. Is there anything more important we want our children to learn?

TODDLER TIME

MESSING AROUND IN THE SAND

by Jeannine Perez

I love sand,
I love sand.
On my clothes,
Between my toes.
Itchy, gritty sand,
Covering my hand.
I love sand,
I love sand.

I love sand,
I love sand.
Lots of fun,
In the sun.
Build it in a mound,
Then scatter it around,
I love sand,
I love sand!
(Tune: "Are You Sleeping")

Sand play presents a new world for toddlers to conquer. It becomes a summer fun recipe that combines the components of tactile experimentation, space and time to explore, and a wonderful opportunity to "make a mess!" For teachers, sand play is also an opportunity to present new concepts of math (volume, weight, and measurement), problem-solving, and science while having fun and stretching the imagination.

Take the time to prepare toddlers for open and independent sand play by establishing two simple rules that will then become habit before sandbox play begins. Tell your toddlers that:

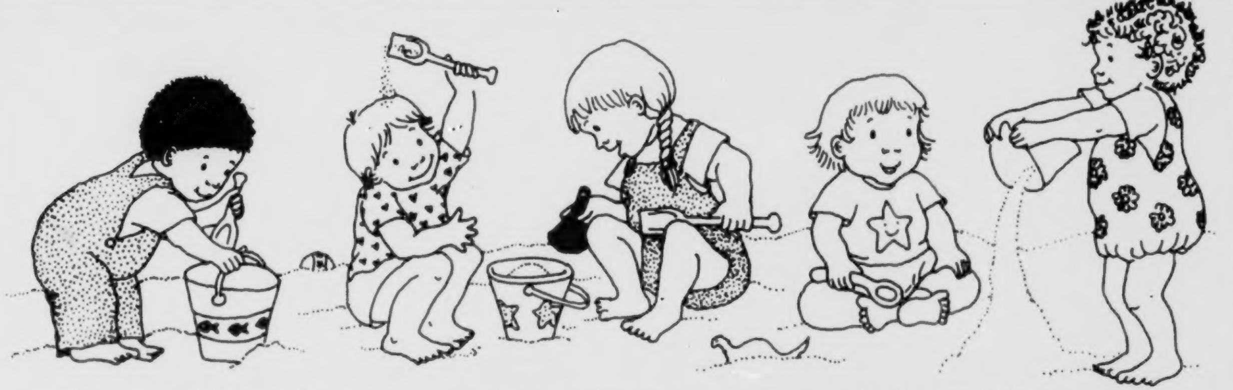
1. Sand does not belong in their hair.
2. Sand does not belong in their mouths.

We practice good sand manners early in the season by doing mini-sand activities in an indoor sand pile. We fill our watertable about 1/3 full of clean sand (mess on the floor was minimal), and then we focus on very simple activities and comparisons with lots of touching and scooping.

Children are fascinated by the differences in the textures of wet and dry sand. It is easy to maintain moisture in an indoor sand pile, and toddlers will soon learn ways of making shapes and simple sculptures of damp sand by filling cups and other small containers, packing them tightly, and then upturning them. What fun! We used our fingers to carefully and scoop and made small landscapes, bridges, tunnels, and houses.

The outside sand pile opened new worlds of opportunity for my toddlers, and it was easy to use our sand building indoor techniques in the wide, open, outdoor spaces. Even more exciting, now we could also sit in and walk through the marvelous stuff! We reminded our toddlers again that sand should never be thrown or tasted. The simplest activities of filling and emptying cans and cups began our sand play, and then children were excited and motivated enough to explore this medium on their own. Sand is as soothing as clay play to young children, and it makes a wonderful activity before lunch and afternoon naptime, or at the end of the day.

Sandboxes come in all shapes and sizes. The smallest sandbox we made utilized a plastic dishpan of sand on a low table in the classroom. The largest (and most fun) was a huge, uncontained pile in a corner of our playground. Wooden sandboxes are fun and tractor tires are great because they provide a soft sitting ledge. The most dangerous sandbox I've encountered had cement walls and a wide ledge around the sand. All of the children liked to walk or run around the concrete ledge, and it took constant supervision to be sure they didn't run and fall, or jump and fall backwards inside. I was always apprehensive about a child hitting her head on the unforgiving cement.



Removing shoes and socks (we lined them up a near by tree) is a prerequisite for sand play. Then, simple games like covering bare feet with mountains of sand, and then wiggling them back to the surface evokes giggles and shrieks of laughter, no matter how often it is played. Children's eyes widen and then they shriek and dive for emerging pinkies. We even made up a song for this marvelous game:

Cover up each toe.
Where does it go?
Cover up my hand,
with piles and piles of sand.
Peek-a -Boo,
I see you.

We measure dry sand and then pack wet sand into matching cups or cans. Children use a simple balance plastic scale to compare the cans of sand, and then wonder aloud why the wet sand weighs more. They think it is also great fun just to carry the sand to the other end of the sandbox in small buckets or sand trucks. Toddlers keep themselves happily busy for long periods of time just transporting things from one place to another, perhaps because it is exciting to form mountains of sand and see the geography of a small desert change. Don't forget that small legs work hard just to walk in sand.

Making roads and other designs in smooth sand has a hypnotic effect on children. We smooth the sand with our hands, shovels, plastic hoes and rakes, and then make wavy designs and ridges with cardboard rectangles that have triangles or wavy lines cut on one edge. Sometimes we draw pictures and trace the letters in our names or numbers in very wet smooth sand slates and then decide that while that's fun, writing is much more easily done on paper. Wet, smooth sand also provides a wonderful canvas for bare footprints and handprints, and it is fun to squeeze the sand between our toes, and then compare the sizes and shapes of handprints and footprints.

A few weeds growing along the edge of the sandbox can provide an impromptu science lesson. They pull out of sand easily. We turned our weeds upside down, looked at them with a magnifying glass and gently touched the intricate root system. One little boy laughed at the upside down weed and said the roots looked like they were having a bad hair day. So we tied on a stick crosspiece and wound around a scarf to change our weed into an interesting doll that reigned over the sandbox for the rest of the summer.

Sand sculptures are most easily formed with damp sand. We smoothed humps of sand into dinosaurs, castles, and other shapes. Of course, we needed rivers and lakes. A hose trickling into the sandbox provided temporary water systems, and we watched the moisture quickly disappear. Sometimes we buried plastic containers to provide more lasting lakes, and mounded hills and mountains to surround them.

The hardest part of sand play is cleanup. Because dry sand shakes off easily, I usually plan a running or jumping game like "Duck, Duck, Goose" outside the sandbox in soft grass before cleaning up to go in for lunch and naps. Dry sand falls off without a lot of brushing, and of course we never have loose sand wandering in hair. A dishpan full of warm water to walk and splash through removes the dust that remains on feet and legs. We've even been known to declare beach days in the heat of midsummer, and combine sand with water play. Toddlers come into the classroom fairly clean, mellow, happy, and ready for quieter activities! We all feel like we've just returned from a vacation at the seashore.

ORGANIZING MESSY AREAS

by Karen Stephens

In the thick of childhood, children can get very messy. And that's just how it should be! Usually, the messier children get during play, the more fun they're having. And where there's actively engaged play, learning is in the air!

Messy play comes in lots of different packaging. It may be painting with tempera or watercolors. Everyone expects fingerpainting to be a bit messy, but I've even seen children at an art easel with paint from head to toe.

Other types of messy play include: art experiences of all types (casting, modeling clay, gluing collages, spatter painting, etc.), water play, sand play, mud play, silly putty, play dough, cornstarch and water play, soap flake and water play, and even snow table play. No matter what children get into, it can get messy. But with a little organization the mess won't bring you (or parents!) needless headaches. Following are ideas to start you on your way. Get ready to get your hands dirty, and dig in!

Flooring Locate messy play over washable flooring. Ideally this is linoleum, wood, or tile. If your entire classroom is carpeted, place a sheet of plastic under the work area. Shower curtains and vinyl tablecloths are economical possibilities. (Newspapers or flat bedsheets can also be spread beneath messy play areas, but some still might absorb through onto carpeting.)

Play Surface Provide tables and chairs that are easily cleaned. Futons in messy areas are within minutes of unsightly stains!

Traffic Patterns Limit the amount of carpeted area children must cross in order to retrieve play supplies, reach a drying area, place work on display table, or locate cleanup materials. Hands dripping with paint or sand create easy-to-follow tracks across carpet!

Organize messy play away from heavy traffic areas, such as entry doorways. Enthusiastic children might unintentionally decorate unsuspecting parents' or visitors' clothing! Passersby might also walk on a paint-spattered floor and carry it right onto carpeting.

Wet Clean Up Locate messy play areas as near to a water source as possible. A small, child-height sink in the learning station is ideal. Provide a small storage unit stocked with sponges and towels so children can help with cleanup.

If a water source isn't near, have a bucket and sponges on hand for quick cleanup.

Dry Clean Up Provide brooms and dustpans for cleanup of sand, foam bits, etc. (**Hint:** Cut the length of adult brooms to children's size. It's easier for kids to use them!) Children really enjoy cleanup when they can use a small handheld vacuum. Try to place your messy area near an electrical outlet to take advantage of their interest.

Cover Ups Messy play is more gratifying for children when they don't have to worry about getting their clothing dirty. (And parents are more supportive of messy play when children's clothing isn't ruined by stains!)

Typically old, adult shirts, worn backwards, can be used for paint or play dough smocks. (Cut sleeves to child elbow-length for comfort; otherwise sleeves get in the children's way...and into paint cups!)

For wet play, such as water or snow table play, plastic smocks are very helpful. (Children must wear mittens while creating sculptures in a snow table.) They may be used for all types of messy play, including silly putty and gluing. Child-sized plastic smocks are available in stores or catalogs. (Velcro closures make them adjust to various children's sizes.)

If the budget is tight, teachers can make homemade water-

proof smocks by cutting head and arm holes in large plastic garbage bags. Once cut, bags are slipped over children's head like a shirt. (CAUTION: Provide extra close supervision if using plastic bags. Bags are for smocks, not playing with as a toy!)

Easy Access to Play Materials At children's eye-level, provide open-faced storage shelving. If shelving is wooden, make sure it has a good coat of shellac to repel water and paint. Storage shelving allows children to obtain play materials independently. It also lets them see all the play possibilities they have to offer; this encourages wise decision-making.

Accessorized Play Kits To encourage complex, detailed play (and attention spans!) provide ample play accessories for messy play. Store accessories attractively to motivate their use.

To promote responsibility and quick cleanup, provide plastic, see-through tubs for storage for accessories. For organization (and to promote meaningful literacy), label tubs with a picture of the item it contains as well as the written name.

For instance, with a water table, provide rubber sea creatures such as seals, whales, sharks, etc. Put animals in a clear container for easy viewing. With clear packing tape, secure a photo of ocean animals on the tub. An index card with the title "Sea Creatures" written on it can also be taped. (Covering the photo and index card completely with tape will make it waterproof and more durable.)

▶*Water Play Kits:* boats, baby dolls, sink and float objects, measuring cups and spoons, plastic pitchers, corks of various shapes and sizes, and exploratory toys such as funnels and wheels.

▶*Sand Play Kits:* farm or desert animals, dinosaurs, sea shells, plastic sand molds, measuring cups and spoons, baking tins of various shapes and sizes, balance scales, shovels and buckets, items for drawing and printing in the sand (tongue depressors, popsicle sticks, plastic combs, cookie cutters, etc.).

Display Area for Creations Although messy play does not always end up with a finished product, there are times when children will want to keep products they've made. Easel paintings can be dried by clipping them onto bungee cords stretched and mounted on walls. Clothesline works, too. (Budget and space allowing, drying racks are also available commercially.)

Dried paintings can be displayed on bulletin boards, taped on washable walls, or even hung from the ceiling like vertical flags.

Three-dimensional creations from play dough or casting materials can be displayed at children's eye level on small tables or shelving tops. I've even seen inventive teachers arrange kids' creations on an inverted, wooden rocking boat; the stairstep design lends a flair of artistic display! A plastic watch case (donated by a jeweler) can set off children's work in its best light.

Okay, now you're ready. It's time to get MESSY! Enjoy!

IT'S IN THE DOUGH

by Tania Cowling

Play-doh is a 41-year-old favorite of children. Play-doh is the brand name of this modeling compound that was developed by a Cincinnati company called Rainbow Crafts. It was first demonstrated and sold in a department store in Washington D.C. back in 1956. As we look at Play-doh in 1997, it has gone hi-tech. We now have the colors of gold and silver, scented colors, a "splash'n play-doh soap" (a moldable soap clay) and a CD ROM game "Play-doh Creations" (an educational software program for children).

Playing with Play-doh or any other modeling material is a tactile experience that benefits children in many ways. Clay sometimes can be a messy experience, but its good points outweigh the bad. Wearing smocks, using Formica or vinyl-cloth table covers and knowing that cleanup is just soap and water makes this art experience easy and fun.

Using Play-doh is such an open-ended tactile learning experience. Children get a lot of manipulative practice when they squeeze, roll, pinch, and pound this material. As you knead the dough and use accessories such as rolling pins and cutters, the child gains more control over hand and arm movements and this improves coordination.

Playing with dough is a natural outlet through which children can express their emotions. If the child is frustrated or angry, a positive release could be the pounding, pulling, and squeezing this clay together. Children develop their sense of rhythm as they repeat patterns of movement at the clay table. Pound, pound, pound and tap, tap, tap incorporates music into clay play.

Cooperative play and dramatic play can be seen when children use Play-doh. If a group of children connect all the coils they've made to create the word's largest snake, they are expressing cooperation with one another. Play-doh also inspires dramatic play as children mimic the roles of community helpers. A child can be a baker, cook, florist, inventor, and so on as he creates products with clay.

Making homemade play dough is a great experience. As children mix and knead the ingredients, they observe the transformation from dry ingredients to a wet, sticky substance and finally to a soft, pliable dough. Gather children, kitchen bowls, measuring cups and ingredients and proceed with this valuable lesson. Discuss the recipe and even make a picture chart for children to follow.

It would be wise to discourage children from eating the dough, even though the ingredients are natural.

PLAY DOUGH RECIPES

No-Cook Play Dough

You'll Need: 4 cups sifted flour ◆1 cup salt ◆1 or more cups water (mix slowly to desired consistency) ◆1 Tablespoon cooking oil ◆a few drops of food coloring (optional)

What to Do:

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together.
2. Add food coloring to the water and slowly add this to the dry ingredients.
3. Knead the dough until it is smooth and the color is well-mixed.
4. Store the dough in an airtight container. Avoid storing it in a plastic bag because it will become too wet.

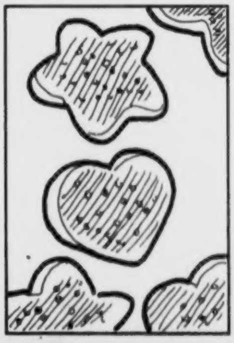
OIL
FLOUR
SALT

Cooked Play Dough

You'll Need: 4 cups flour ◆2 cups salt ◆4 Tablespoons cream of tartar ◆4 cups water ◆2 Tablespoons cooking oil

What to Do;

1. Cook all of these ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat. Be sure to stir the mixture constantly until it is stiff.
2. Let it cool and then knead it.
3. Store the dough in a plastic container. Because the dough is cooked, it will last a long time.

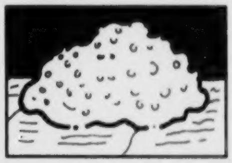


Cinnamon Dough

You'll Need: 2 cups flour ◆1 cup salt ◆5 teaspoons cinnamon ◆3/4 to 1 cup warm water

What to Do:

1. Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl.
2. Make a well in the center of this mixture. Pour in the water. Mix with your hands until the dough forms a ball. (More flour or water may be added so the dough is neither crumbly or sticky.)
3. Knead the dough on a board until smooth.
4. Use this like any clay material. It's great for cookie cutter ornaments rolled about 3/4 inch thick and baked at 350 degrees for 1 hour (until hard). This modeling dough smells wonderful!



Bumpy Texture Dough

You'll Need: 3/4 cup flour ◆1/4 cup salt ◆2 or 3 teaspoons of water

What to Do: Mix flour with salt, then mix with 2 or 3 teaspoons of water. This dough will have a grainy, bumpy texture.

When playing with play dough, supply accessories for added fun. Provide tools to make impressions and cut shapes. Provide tools such as forks, plastic caps for circles, dull plastic knives, rolling pins, cookie cutters, garlic press (to make imaginary spaghetti and hair), and rubber stamps to make pictorial impressions.

The most important objective of this unit is understanding and emphasizing that the process of clay playing is more important than the end product. Preservation depends on the child's desire to keep the creation and your supply of the clay product. If you wish to save the creation, provide a special drying area. Air drying takes a few days, whereas baking the dough in the oven takes only hours. Sometimes a child will be happy with a photo of his creation, leaving the clay to be reused again. Just make sure to date and dictate the titles for each child's masterpiece. From start to finish, enjoy the moments of creative play!

DIGGING IN THE DIRT

by Susan Entz

Digging in the dirt and sprinkling it with a hose are inherently "messy" activities. But that is more than offset by the learning that occurs when young children care for a garden. The gardening theme can begin weeks before the first spade of dirt is turned, and can highlight a variety of content areas.

"DON'T THROW MY GARBAGE AWAY!"

Snails, slugs, and worms are natural recyclers. One exciting way to kick off a unit on gardening is to dig in the yard to find a few of these animals to add to a small classroom habitat. Place gravel, soil, and leaves in the bottom of an old fish tank and sprinkle with water before introducing the snails or worms. Have children put table scraps (except meat) in the aquarium before leaving school each day. (Snails and slugs are nocturnal.) Check the next morning to see which items vanished.

Once children understand that their garbage makes a fine meal for other animals, create a compost pile. Have children rake up leaves and grass clippings for the pile and add their scraps to it daily. In a short time, this rich mulch will be ready to add to the garden.

PLANNING THE GARDEN

Planning and maintaining a garden is a big job and one that encourages the development of sound social skills. Young children need to learn to work cooperatively, to negotiate and to problem solve in order to make this project work. They first must decide whether to grow flowers, vegetables or both.

Then they need to determine how much room each type of crop needs and how many they can grow in the space they have available. To help the class visualize what is needed, cut out squares that each mature plant needs in the garden. Moving these "plants" around to make the most fit in the space available requires give and take until the group reaches consensus.

PLANTING

Purchase several real child-sized tools for gardening, rather than using the plastic variety. Have children help to prepare the soil by loosening the soil, adding the mulch, and then forming rows or mounds.

After all of the planning and preparation, planting the seeds in the ground is an exciting moment. Examine the different types of seeds closely. Some are no bigger than a dot, while others are large and easily planted. Add a category to the daily "helpers" chart for those who have the privilege of watering the garden or of weeding. Stress to the group the value of doing a good job and of responsibility.

While waiting for the seeds to sprout in the garden, conduct some science experiments with potted plants in the classroom. Have the children determine the better growing conditions:

- Shade/Sun/No Light At All
- Water/No Water
- Worms in the Potting Soil/ No Worms

As the plants grow, stress the importance of being a good observer. Is the soil dry and need watering or is it already saturated? Are bugs beginning to invade the garden? Is our friendly ladybug eating the dreaded aphids on the leaves?

Document each step of the summer garden in photographs to use in classroom discussions, a group big book, and individual writing activities.

An attractive art project also records the child's understanding of the growth process.

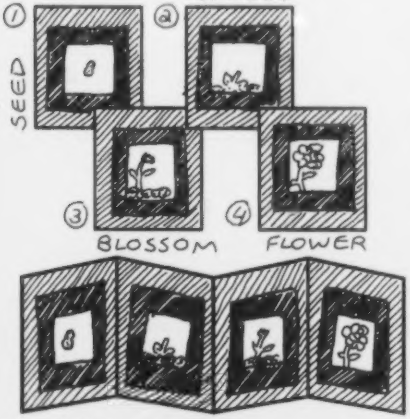
1. Make an oriental folding screen by covering cardboard panels with deep orange construction paper (9"X12").
2. During the course of the project, have each child draw

four different pictures, representing the stages of seed growth on paper measuring 7" X 10 1/2". The first is the picture of a seed, the second a sprout, the third the adult plant with blossoms on it, and fourth, the flower or vegetable.

3. Mount each picture on black construction paper measuring 7"1/2 X 11".

4. Glue the black picture on the orange panel.

5. Tape the four panels together on the back so they stand.

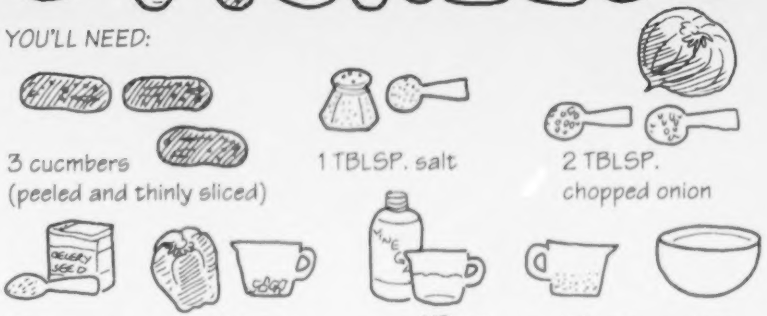


A HARVEST FEAST

Harvest the crop and then wash up after a summer-long messy project for a harvest feast. Plan a menu that features the vegetables grown and utilizes the flower blossoms for the table decor. Invite families or another class to enjoy the fruits of this group's labors.

FRESH PICKLES

YOU'LL NEED:



3 cucmbers (peeled and thinly sliced)

1 TBLSP. salt

2 TBLSP. chopped onion

1 tsp. celery seed

1/4 cup chopped green pepper

1/2 cup white vinegar

1/3 cup white sugar

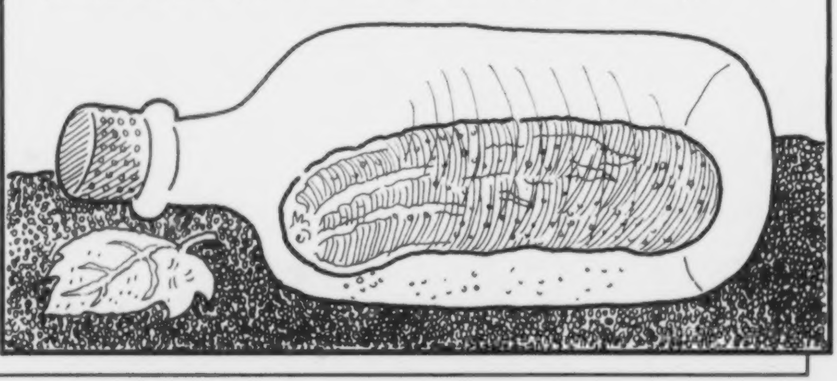
deep bowl

What to Do:

1. Place sliced cucumbers into a deep bowl. Sprinkle with salt and set aside for 1 hour.
2. Add green peppers, onions, and celery seeds.
3. Combine vinegar and sugar and stir constantly until sugar is totally dissolved. Pour over vegetables.
4. Let set in refrigerator overnight. Eat within 1 week.

PICKLE FUN

As your cucumber plants are growing, find a small cucumber that has just begun to grow. Leave it on the vine but stick it through the small neck of a glass bottle. Place bottle down on the soil and cover with cucumber leaves for shade. Let it grow until cucumber is ready to be picked. Cut the stem, leaving a large cucumber in the bottle. Pour in vinegar to preserve. Cork the opening and you have a seemingly impossible conversation piece! Children will love to explain how it happened!



"MUD-LUCIOUS" LEARNING

by Leanne Grace

"Mud, mud, I love MUD!" is the first line in a song by Rick Charte from his tape Alligator in the Elevator (Pine Point Records). Unfortunately many children and adults never get to experience all the sensory pleasures of mud.

Last spring our new facility was surrounded by mud as the landscaping was yet to be completed. Needless to say, mud became the "emergent curriculum." When you can't get away from it, use it. Mud was brought into the classroom, not only on the bottom of our shoes, but to put into the water table to investigate. Some children were up to their elbows and others reluctant. We encouraged children to wear water smocks to protect their clothes. As children explored we charted their words: *squishy, slimy, oozy, yuk, gross.* The "mud" song echoed throughout the classroom. The plastic farm animals were added to bury and muck about, and later to wash. A plastic water bottle was one quarter filled with mud and the rest water, to experiment with sediment and settling after the mixture was shaken.

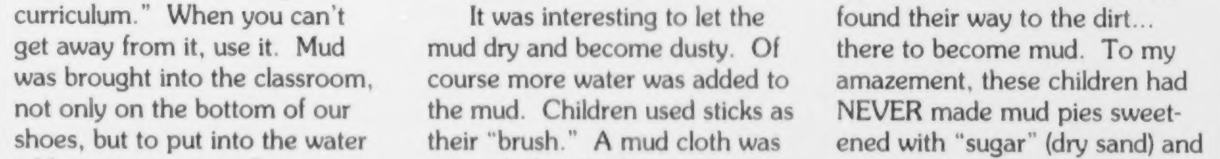
Robert Munsch's *Mud Puddle* book (Annick Press) became a favorite read aloud. It is a predictable, repetitive story about three farm animals who LOVE mud. The story lends itself to dramatic re-enactment and "Oh, lovely mud" was heard from the water table.

It was interesting to let the mud dry and become dusty. Of course more water was added to the mud. Children used sticks as their "brush." A mud cloth was created after children painted on fabric.

To contrast, we cleaned out the "mud" table and made "white" mud, a cornstarch and water mixture. We dumped four boxes of cornstarch and added water until the mixture was slimy. This makes a great goop and ooze that's less gritty. Again the farm animals had to check out this mixture.

Early this fall, we made a "clean" mud mixture. Using *Ivory Snow* and shredded toilet paper we added water to make a slimy mud. This made an excellent sensory goop that the plastic animals once again enjoyed.

After completing our landscaping, we kept a dirt pile just for digging, transporting, and making roads. The children love the mud. One particularly hot, hot summer day buckets of water were available and soon found their way to the dirt... there to become mud. To my amazement, these children had NEVER made mud pies sweetened with "sugar" (dry sand) and baked in the sun until done. We added dried grasses to make adobe bricks and cooked mud burgers on a sunbaked rock. Yes, we were covered in mud and as we washed in buckets of water, I marveled at the simple things we forget to share with children. One little fellow looked up at me with shining eyes and a smile from muddy ear to muddy ear and said, *"This has been the best day in my whole life."*



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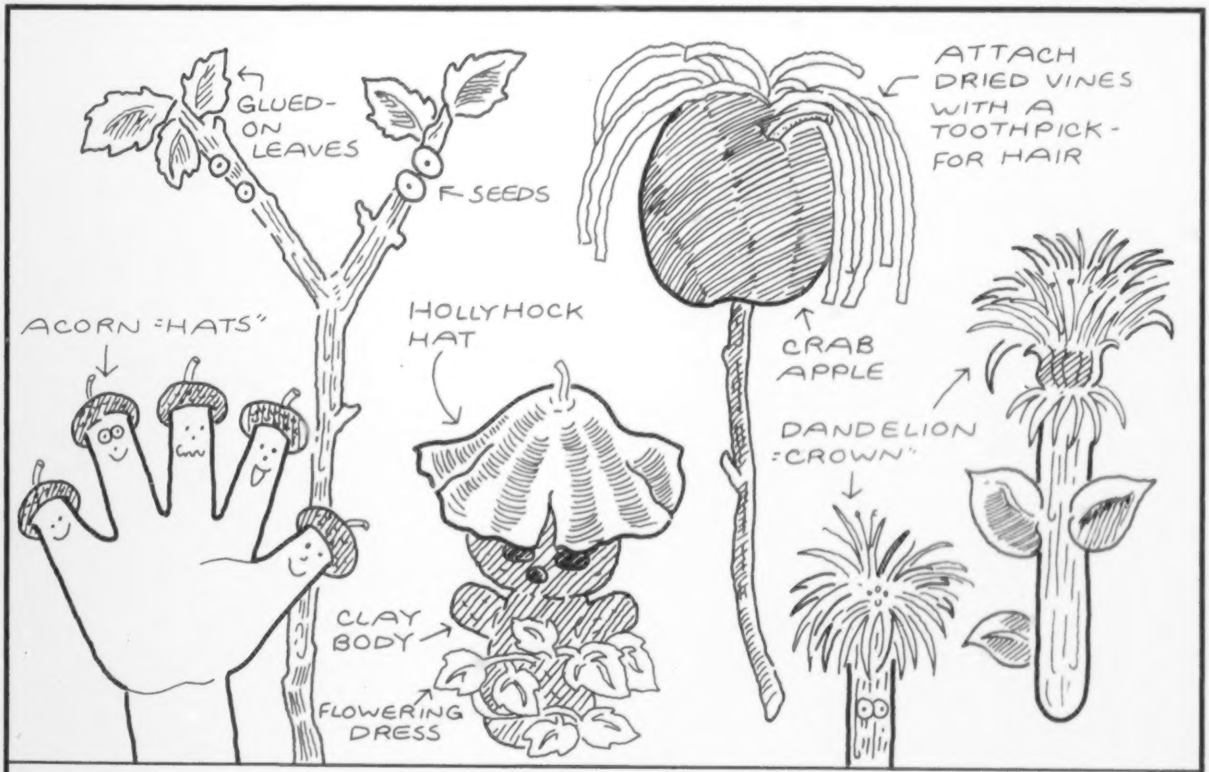
NATURAL MAGIC

by Jeannine Perez

Young children appreciate the beauty of nature through their senses. By involving children in sensory nature activities, we encourage them to look more deeply at all they see, hear, smell, and touch in the playground and in their own backyards. Once awakened, environmental awareness is never lost.

Children are also fascinated by tiny things, small books, pocket toys, and miniature worlds they can create and control. It's exciting to use the beauty of nature to create settings for science experimentation and for all kinds of dramatic play that encourages children to use their imagination, problem-solve answers to their questions, and create their own drama, stories, and plays.

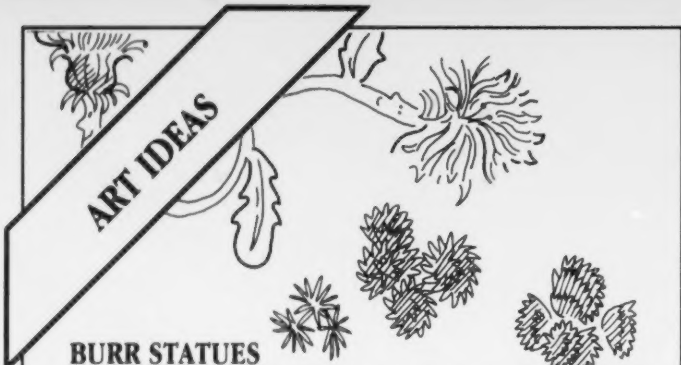


PUPPETS

Encourage creativity! Use forked twigs for easily held bodies and glued on seeds, pods, and leaves to give your puppets personality. Dried vines or moss makes interesting hair! Crab apples are great. Make an apple dancing doll by pushing the stick into a crab apple. Bring cut flowers and morning glory vines from the garden to decorate summer puppets. Hollyhocks make wonderful hats and you can use clay for features and ties leaves on for a flowing dress. Flower puppets are temporary but beautiful. Use a popsicle stick. Add flower petals for arms, and add a fully blooming dandelion for a gold crown.

For easier puppets, use acorn caps for hats on your fingertips, then draw eyes and a mouth on each finger. These finger puppets can talk together or sing songs. Let children use the puppets and take turns acting out favorite stories.

ART IDEAS

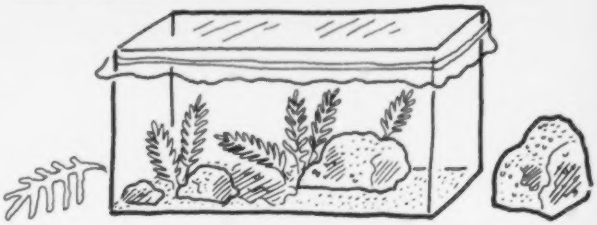


BURR STATUES

Even lowly nuisance stickers and burrs can become learning tools. Just press the burrs carefully together into human or animal shapes. You can make big and little burr bears to act out "The Three Bears" (Goldilocks was constructed of a stick and a flower).

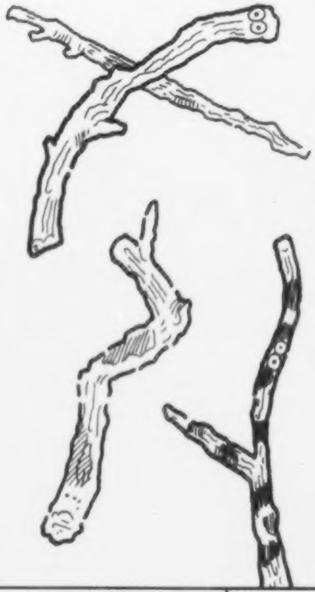
TERRARIUM

Use rocks, earth, sand, mosses, tiny ferns, and other plants to create an indoor environment. If you cover the terrarium with plastic or a lid, it will seldom require additional watering. Set the cover ajar for a few hours if condensation begins to mist the walls of the container. Talk about plants and animals that make the rain forests their habitat, and compare the condensation inside your terrarium to rain.



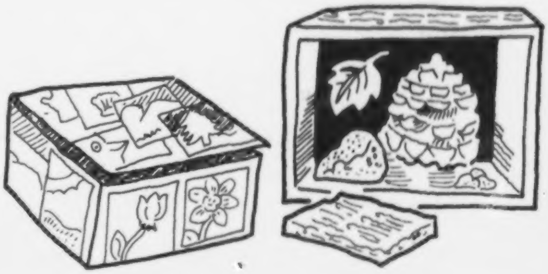
STICK ANIMALS

Make an early morning walk a "stick-gathering" walk. Bring all of the twigs and sticks to an outside art table and decide together what they resemble. Crooked sticks are easiest; they become wonderful snakes. Other sticks and twigs can become birds, or can be glued together (glue guns work best) for a zoo of unique animals. Paint some of your creations with neon tempera colors such as chartreuse, bright pink, electric blue, and glowing yellow. Add stripes, spots, and designs of contrasting colors. These animals (Sylvester Snake, Bertie Birdie, and Zach Zebra) are naturals for your stories and plays.



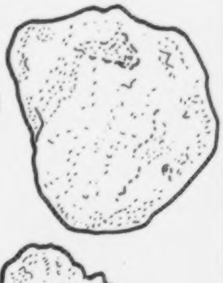
NATURAL TREASURE BOXES

Use shoeboxes or gift boxes to keep treasures collected on walks (rocks, wood, pine cones, shells, bark, etc.). Paint the boxes or cover then with overlapping nature pictures; then coat by brushing with school glue mixed with water. Brush on several coats. You could also use a shallow box or lid to make it a shadowbox. Paint the inside of the shadowbox black or dark blue. Paint the outside and rim a contrasting color to make it look like a frame. Arrange outdoor treasures carefully on the dried paint and when the arrangement is pleasing, secure the treasures to the box with glue or a glue gun.



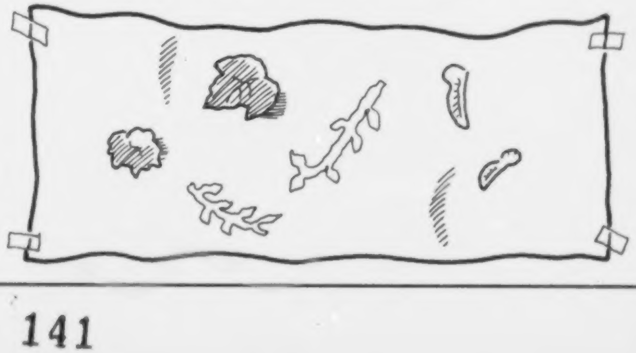
GO FOR A ROCK WALK

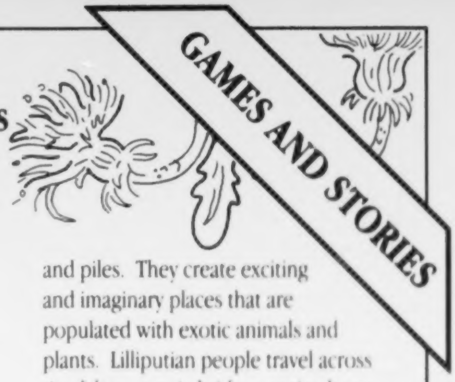
Read *Everyone Needs a Rock* by Byrd Bayler (Simon & Schuster). Then go for a walk and let each child choose a rock to bring back to the classroom. Display the rocks on a shelf or window sill, arranging them from the smallest to the largest.



NATURE COLLAGE

Secure contact paper to a bulletin board or on the wall with the sticky side out. Help children mount small nature treasures like seeds and twigs to the paper to make a nature collage.





MAKE UP STORIES ABOUT IMAGINARY OUTSIDE ADVENTURES

These stories can be group stories dictated to you at circle time, or they can be individual stories to be shared later. Ask children to illustrate their own stories, or work together cooperatively on a mural.

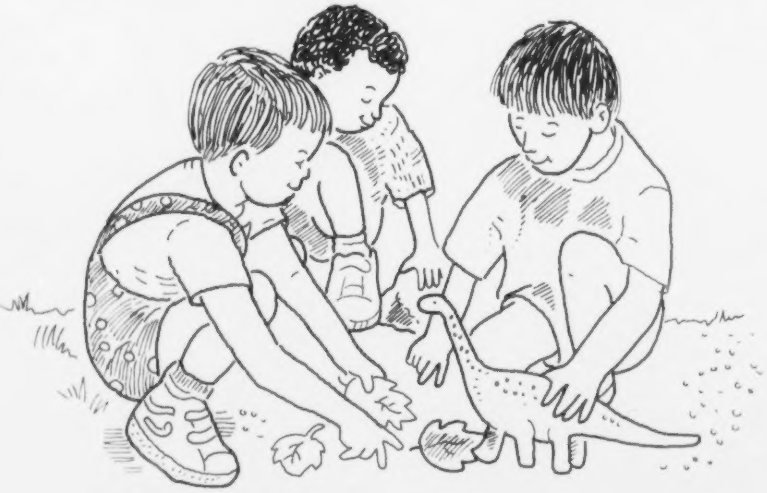
◆ **Nature Game** Put interesting items collected on walks in a bag or box. Let children take turns reaching in and try to guess what the object is without looking at it. Use a large can with a footless sock pulled over the opening for a "Feely Can." Children can reach in without peeking at the can's contents. Ask them to describe the object they are touching. Is it rough, smooth, bumpy, slick, soft, hard, big, or small?

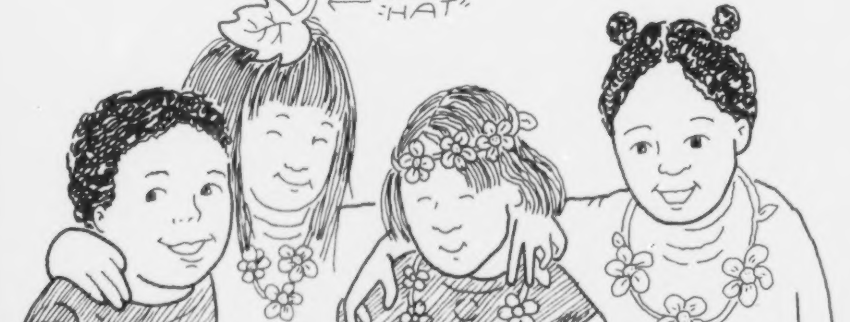
◆ **Play Birds/Trees/Flowers/Animals**
Talk about everything you've seen on your summer walks. Then expand children's nature vocabulary with this game. Take turns being the leader of the game. The leader chooses a category (ie. birds), and others name as many examples as they can remember (robins, turkeys, chickens, ducks). This is a game that gets easier as vocabulary expands, and children learn as they play.

◆ **Have a Nature Scavenger Hunt**
These items do not need to be collected; just enjoyed and described later! Tell children to find:

Something soft
Something shiny
Something round
Something hard and smooth
Trash someone has dropped
A feather
A seed or pod
Something smaller than your thumb

◆ **Make an Imaginary Place**
Children love to play with the earth, digging, sifting dirt and sand through their fingers, making holes and mounds and piles. They create exciting and imaginary places that are populated with exotic animals and plants. Lilliputian people travel across tiny lakes on twig bridges or tiny boats made of seed pods or bark. Locust pods become sea monsters, dinosaurs, or fences for tiny farms. Start your children with a few ideas, then give them enough natural materials to explore, and watch their imaginations take over to create fantastic setting that will astonish you.





STORY PROPS

Children need very few props to recreate tales they know or act out their own stories. Daisy chains make necklaces, garlands, or crowns. Maple seeds or trumpet vine flowers can be used for claws or long fingernails. Large leaves are hats; dry ones— crunchy carpets. If you have an old stump in your playground, it can be many things: a table for Alice in Wonderland tea parties, a stage for puppet plays. Sometimes it becomes a tall mountain or a weathered old castle.

MESSING AROUND WITH MOVEMENT

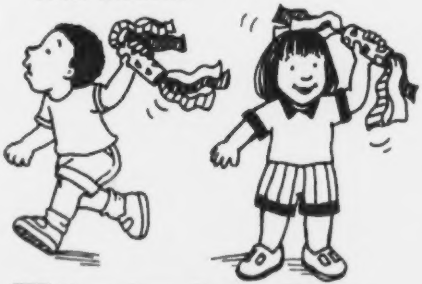
by Margery Kranyik

"Whee! I'm twirling around and around and around!" exclaimed Jeana as she spun amid a blur of colored streamers. *"Grrrrr, Grrrrr,"* roared Romero as he crawled around peering through his lion mask. Each child was experiencing a movement exploration activity using props made as an art activity earlier in the day.

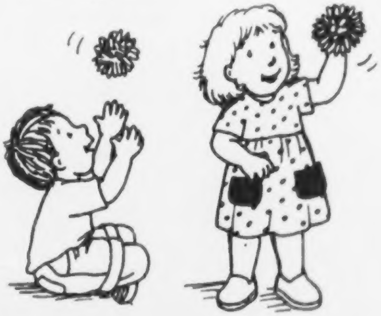
Using props made by the children themselves fosters integration of your program areas (art and music/movement) but also gives ownership to the activity and builds enthusiasm for activities yet to come. So....collect those recyclables, mix up the paint, have your glue, stapler, and markers handy and let's create!

Masks Use ten or twelve inch paper plates. Cut a rectangle shape for both eyes. (Allows more vision for children who may be apprehensive about covering their eyes.) Have children add nose, eyes, mouth, ears, whiskers and other facial identification characteristics. Attach elastic or yarn to each side to tie the mask around the child's head. Now everyone is ready to move like animals at the zoo, on the farm, or in the jungle. Using an animal theme is a fine way to begin movement experiences because children love identifying with animals—the larger, the better!

Streamer Sticks You will need crepe paper streamers cut in three-foot lengths, empty paper tubes, and glue or a stapler. Attach the streamers to the inside of each end of the tube. To add prop personalization, have children draw designs on the tube, add stickers or cover with wrapping paper. Using whatever instrumental music you choose, encourage children to move with their streamer sticks to the music. If your space is limited, children can move streamer sticks while staying in one place—up and down; around the body, fast and slow; in figure eights or in circles. Have them suggest other motions.



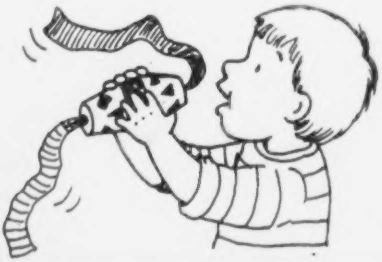
Yarn Pom-Poms Children can wind yarn around a book (Use assorted sizes of books for size variety). Pull off yarn, tie in center, and cut loop edges. Trim to make more "ball" shaped, if desired. Children can use these for concrete practice in directionality, moving the pompoms up, down, around, side to side, left, right. They may be used for practice in throwing and catching from one hand to the other; up in the air; or to a partner. This is an excellent activity for children in need of fine motor development.



Drums Collect an assortment of empty cylindrical containers—coffee cans, cereal containers. Let children paint each or cover with wrapping or construction paper. (Wrapping paper is an easy medium with which to work and adds color to your prop.) Make drum beaters from pencils with a wad of masking tape at one end or children may use their hands as beaters. Practice marching in a parade, using drums as accompaniment. March heavy, light, loudly, softly, frontwards, backwards, fast and slow. Play a Souza march or other appropriate march music and have a parade.

Sheet Chute Give your group a queen-sized, flat sheet and some fabric paint. Encourage children to draw bold designs, write their name or create an illustration related to your theme. Use the sheet for outdoor play or large space activity for children to move up and down; flap fast and slow; run, skip, or hop underneath and back; shake; bend down or stand up. Children unable to use their legs can participate with a peer aide from their wheelchair or scooter.

Shakers: Take two matching paper cups of any size. (In the interest of environmental friendliness, use paper rather than foam.) Make a small hole in the center of each cup bottom. Insert a crepe paper streamer, ribbon or yarn two or three feet long and know or glue inside. Add pistachio nut shells for sound making filler and tape lip ends of cups together. Children can decorate with cut paper design or markers. Use the shakers as rhythm or sound effects for marching or responding to the beat of appropriate music. Children with limited motor coordination can hold cup shakers between hands, wrists, or arms.



Check your activity books and periodicals for other handmade movement/music props with which children can help. It is always rewarding to have a prop for **each** child in your group. Having child-ownership in the creation of the props is always an added attraction. Have fun!

A MESS OF MATERIALS FOR MESSY ART

by Gail P. Jones

If you like the idea of "two for the price of one," you'll probably like this idea for messy play. By making art materials for "another" day, children will first enjoy the "making" and later, enjoy the "using"!

HOMEMADE WATERCOLORS

This fantastic recipe for homemade watercolors will no doubt be used all year long! Not only are the water color paints better than store-bought ones, as much fun to make as to use, but also, they are very economical! Make them in generous amounts in plastic mini-muffins trays, cups or bottle caps. Mix:

- 1 tablespoon clear vinegar
- 1 tablespoon baking soda

When the excitement of seeing the "fizzling" dies down, add:

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon of corn syrup.

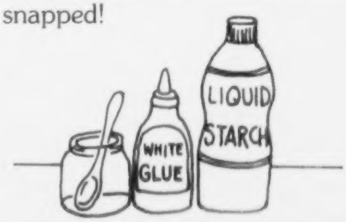
Create the color you want with food coloring (It's another great opportunity for discovering color blends!) Paint a picture right away or save for "another" day!

PIÑATAS

When the need for a piñata arrives is December, we're often very busy with the multitude holiday activities. Why not make the pinata in a week outside during the lazy, hazy days of summer and store it until needed? Create a balloon donkey or whatever shape you wish. Begin the first day covering it with squeezed out newspaper strips soaked in liquid starch. On the second and third days, do the same with torn paper towel strips. On the fourth day, use torn colored tissue paper dipped in liquid starch, and, on the fifth day add rick rack, netting, yarn, etc. (Or, save this decorating step until December.) Cut out a hole and fill with small toys and candy when Los Posados arrives! (You can also use thin glue or wheat paste for making the piñata).

GOOP

Having to be inside in the summer on a rainy day can be "boring," but not if you've made some liquid laundry starch and Elmer's glue "goop" for the occasion! Let children start with two parts glue to one part liquid starch and see when it becomes like "silly putty" by adding small amounts of each material until it is not sticky. Save it in a plastic bag or closed container for a dough that stretches, bounces, picks up pictures off of the comic strips, and breaks when snapped!



PLASTER OF PARIS MARKER HOLDER

Why not create a Plaster of Paris marker holder to use all year long? Mix the plaster with recommended amounts of water in the closed zip-locking bag. Feel the warmth as you knead the bag with your hands! Mold into the desired shape and let it sit on a flat surface. Open the zip-locking bag carefully to expose the top of the sculpture. Add upside down lids of markers before the plaster hardens. When dry, it may be painted and decorated. Add markers for a "marker holder." Looking for lids will become a chore of the past! (Remember to wash off plaster in tubs of water, not down the drain!)

SAWDUST DOUGH

If you have "woodworkers" that saw wood in your group or parents that do so at home, ask them to save you their sawdust! Use four cups of strained sawdust mixed with two cups of flour and approximately one cup of water to make a sculpturing sawdust dough. Add two tablespoons of glue when ready to create your sculpture! Let the creation dry before painting.

FINGERPAINT

If you'd like to make your own fingerpaint, an adult will need to assist the children because the mixture needs to be stirred over low heat until thick and clear. But, the children can do the measuring.

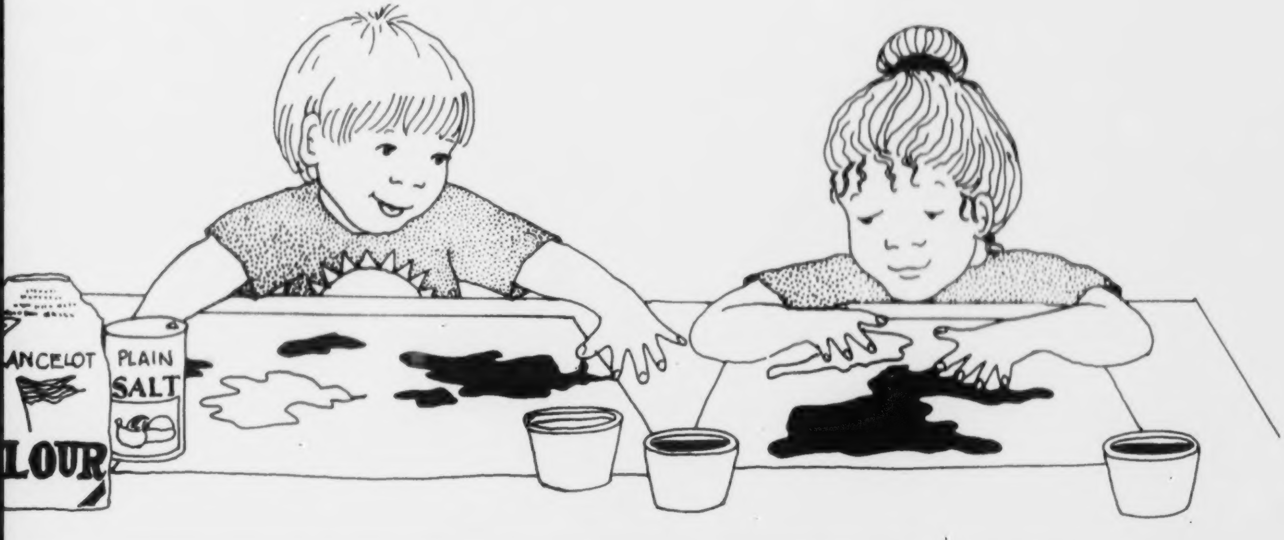
- 2 cups of white flour
- 2 tsp. of salt
- 2 1/2 cups of cold water

Add the two and one-half cups of hot water to the flour and salt. Children can create the colors of the fingerpaint with food coloring or dry tempera paint when it cools and is added to baby food jars. Always use shiny, smooth paper for fingerpainting.

REVERSIBLE ART

A "reversible" art idea for a rainy day is to make something "inside," you can later use "outside" like coffee filter art. Let children draw with markers on coffee filters and save them for a "sunny day." Outside, they can spray the creation with water and watch the magic happen!

Other fun things to do on a hazy, sunny day might include making frames for displaying art work throughout the year or punching holes with hole punchers in construction paper scraps for collage confetti. Whatever materials children create, they'll be very "special" just because they made them!



DRIP! DROP! PLIP! PLOP!

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

When you think of young children painting, do you automatically imagine a soft scene with two children painting quietly at either side of an easel? Well, think again! While meditative art projects have their own special charm, art projects involving paint are always rich with opportunities for children to get down and dirty — and chatty! And the language of messy painting projects is inherently splashed with color and brilliance.

Here are some simple-to-do messy painting projects especially designed to inspire fun-filled language. The trick is to sit with children as they work and to squeeze as much language into the experience as possible. Comment on their efforts and the results. Record artistic commentaries as captions for each painting. Then, after the paint has dried, you can bind each child's paintings into individual "coffee table collections" they may treasure at home. In this way, the artwork—and the language—will continue to take center stage in the child's artistic sensibilities.

DRIP PAINTING

Have children load tempera paint into clean eye-droppers and drip different-colored paint onto paper. *("Wow! I see that paint really slipping and dripping off that dropper! And, look how the colors are streaming together on the paper. Let's tip the paper to see what happens. Or would you rather press a second paper on top of your drip painting to make two smooshy paintings?")*

DRIZZLE PAINTING

Put a supply of paint into an old pastry bag or into a plastic sandwich bag. Snip away a tiny piece of one corner of the bag. Then have children squeeze the bag and drizzle the paint this way and that on the paper. *("Squeeze-drizzle, squeeze-drizzle, squeeze-drizzle. That's it! You're drizzling and twizzling all over the place. You're making a dazzling twizzle-drizzle painting! And, I love how the colors are zig-zagging together!")*

SPIN PAINTING

Use a commercial children's spin-painting turntable for this one, or try picking up a lazy Susan from a garage sale. You can also place a piece of cardboard on a small rubber ball and use this as a makeshift turntable. (Just tape paper in place on the lazy Susan or cardboard and then tip and turn the turntable for the child.) Place paint in clean squeeze bottles (Recycled condiment bottles work well.) and let children twist and shout as they paint. *("Let's make a dizzy-tizzy spin painting. Wow! I see colors going 'round and 'round. This is really crazy-daisy art! What do you think your spin painting looks like?")*

SPLASH PAINTING

Plan this project for the outdoors and be sure to have everyone wear smocks or playclothes. To prepare, fill shallow plastic bowls with tempera paint. Add water and mix. Meanwhile, spread out newspaper drop cloths. On top of these, place clean papers and, in the center of the papers, place dishes of paint. Have children drop small objects (balls, clothespins, superhero action figures) into the paint bowls so that the paint splashes and splatters out onto the papers. *("Look out below! I see paint flinging and flying every which way! It's sloshing and swinging all around! And look how it's plopping and slopping together on the paper! ")*

SPRINKLE PAINTING

Place watered-down tempera paint into small sprinkle containers, such as discarded salt and pepper shakers, or containers

Art in Words

Here are some extra tips for squeezing the most language out of messy painting experiences — or any art experience!

Aim to respond to children's work using strong, colorful verbs and adjectives. Instead of saying, *"I see you are painting with a pretty green,"* try saying, *"I see you are stroking the forest green paint in a long curve-shape across the whole paper."*

To encourage children's efforts, use specific, descriptive praise rather than praise that offers little or no insight into why you like their work. Instead of saying, *"That pink is pretty next to that blue. Good Job!"* try saying, *"I like how that fuchsia pink is blending with that sky blue — your painting really helps me to imagine a beautiful sunset."*

As you comment on their efforts, include lots of repetitive, rhythmic, rhyming language (e.g., "shake-shake-shake" "sprinkling and spritzing," "splishing and splashing," etc.). Aside from being more fun to listen to, the jazzy beat, patterns and sounds of such language are intriguing to children who will be eager to experiment with such combinations on their own.

with sprinkle tops saved from glitter. Invite children to shake the paint over the paper. (*"Shake-shake-shake! I see paint moving and shaking. I see paint sprinkling and spritzing down! I see paint splishing and splashing on the paper. It's a rainbow shower!"*)

IN THE BOOK CORNER

RESOURCES FOR MESSY PLAY

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

- Share some of the messy, but clever, activities in *Apples, Bubbles, and Crystals* by Andrea T. Bennett and James H. Kessler (McGraw-Hill). For each letter of the alphabet the writers offer a fun and simple science activity. They provide a list of materials needed and step-by-step instructions demonstrated by whimsical animal characters. You'll especially want to try "Bubbles Without Troubles," "Moo to Glue," "Ice Antics," "New Juice Use," and Wax'N Wash."
- Each project in *Lotions, Potions, and Slime: Mudpies and More!* by Nancy Blakey (Tricycle Press) includes a "wet or gooey stage." Some activities are messier than others and best done outdoors; other activities in the three categories art, food, and science, are easy and involve little time. Share "Oobleck," "Silly Slime," "Sponge Mitt Painting," and "Fountain of Foam." You'll find recipes for different types of dough, clay, and glue. Other books in this series include *The Mudpies Activity Book* and *More Mudpies.*
- Bob Keeshan's (better known as Captain Kangaroo) wonderful book *Family Fun Activity Book* (Deaconess Press) includes many messy learning activities. You'll find clear lists of materials and instructions. In the "Arts and Crafts" section, try "Bonker Bubbles," "Quick Play Clay," "Sculpture Gloop," and "Blender Paper." From the section "Nature and Science," share "Detective Kit" in which children do fingerprinting.
- Mary Ann Kohl's *Good Earth Art: Environmental Art for Kids* (Bright Ring Publishing) is an indispensable resource for messy learning. Kohl's detailed Table of Contents shows at a glance what age you should use the activity with, what type of activity it is, and whether or not recycled materials or materials from nature are used. Kohl's focus is on art experiences that will develop a caring attitude in children about the earth and will encourage them to recycle material in art projects. Try "Newspaper Design," "Stone Painting," "Cotton Ball Clouds," "Sand Paintings," and "Natural Finger Paint."
- Among the many titles by Kohl is *Preschool Art* (Gryphon House). This book is arranged and illustrated in the same way as *Good Earth Art* . You'll find basic activities that introduce children to different art materials, such as, "Wet Chalk Drawing," "Sand and Glue Drawing," "Paint Blots," "Great Goop," "Sponge Wrap," and "Salty Paint Shake."
- Virginia K. Morin's *Messy Activities and More* (Chicago Review Press) lives up to its promise of "*....167 messy, noisy, rambunctious...activities for adults to share with children age 3-10.*" Morin encourages you to "Make a beautiful mess...." The activities are quick and easy. Check out "Cotton Ball Snowball Fight," "Shaving-Cream Drawing," and "Yarn Spiderweb."
- Have some messy fun with *Painting* by Ruth Thomson (Childrens Press). You'll find a combination of appealing photographs of the completed projects and precise lists of needed materials, preliminary steps to do ahead, and steps for the actual activity. Introduce young children to ways to experiment with different kinds of paint. They'll enjoy "Color Combing," "Dot Pictures," and, my favorite "Splatter and Drip."
- You'll find simple, but sloppy experiments in *Science Fun with Mud and Dirt* by Rose Wyler (Julian Messner/Simon & Schuster). Encourage children to examine what's found in dirt, what earthworms do in the dirt, what happens to mud puddles, and what occurs when you bake a mud pie. Children will learn to make adobe and how to make dams in pans of dirt and water.

EARTHWORM CAKE AND SNAILS

by Karel Kilimnik

Mud, dirt, water, and sand are great for making mudpies, planting seeds and bulbs, and discovering different life forms. Children have the right idea! Become part of your environment, make a special mudpie, and mix it up with your surroundings!

Rosemary Wells' new book *Bunnycakes* (Dial) adds a new story to her Ruby and Max tales. It is Grandma's birthday. Max makes her an earthworm birthday cake heaped with mud. Meanwhile, Ruby is determined to make an "angel surprise cake with raspberry-fluff icing."

In his eagerness to help Ruby, Max spills the different ingredients and is sent to the store for replacement items. Each time Ruby writes the needed item on paper for the grocer to read. Max decides he needs some "Red-Hot Marshmallow Squirters" for his cake so he adds this to Ruby's list... except he can't write words yet so the grocer doesn't understand what he wants.

Max finally figures out how to communicate his desired ingredient through a much more defined drawing. Ruby gets her ingredients and at long last Max does, too!

Now, something else you might find while making mudpies and earthworm cakes is a snail. *Snail* by Jens Olesen (Silver Burdett) is one in a wonderful nature series for young children called Stopwatch Books. (Other titles include *Chicken and Egg* and *Bean and Plant*. They are also available in Big Book format.)

Each book is a careful study of the subject. Large pictures present a clear view of a snail from all perspectives as well as different body parts. The photographs are described in simple text.

You'll thoroughly enjoy Betsy Bowen's books about life in the Northwoods. Her latest *Gathering, a Northwoods Counting Book* (Little, Brown) is an account of the hands-on-preparation required to prepare for winter, the most demanding time of year.

In May, the planting starts with one seed; three is collecting summer memories (*"floating along in canoes....jumping off the cliff into the river, and catching a whole jarful of blinking fireflies"*). The list continues until twelve inches of snow fall.

The amaryllis is a treasure to behold as it goes from an ugly, bulging bulb to a magnificent burst of color. *A Flower Grows* by Ken Robbins (Dial) is a photographic essay tracing the growth of an amaryllis bulb.

You have to mix it up with soil and water to get this lovely plant growing. At times the growth appears to happen before your very eyes. An extended note at the end provides a valuable how-to-do-it.

The Sierra Club has produced an interesting volume of photographs, *Squishy, Misty, Damp & Muddy: The In-Between World of Wetlands* by Molly Cone (Sierra Club Books for Children). Not only do we get nitty-gritty information on wetlands (what they look, feel, and smell like, and also who lives there) but also a healthy dose of what is happening to all of us as wetlands are destroyed. For instance, did you know that a wetland acts like an enormous sponge during rainy weather and soaks up water?

This book presents a picture of life in a wetland with so much to see, hear, and touch that you just want to find a wetlands and protect it.

Beach Feet by Lynn Reiser (Greenwillow) is a multilayered book. The simple text accompanies very detailed illustrations. Reiser adds "footnotes" of scientific tidbits about feet, both ours and the beach creatures'. I learned that a sand fly tastes with its feet, that a snowy egret has bright yellow feet, and that a clam has only one foot.

STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

MESSY IS OK

by Sandra Malcolm

It's nice to have everything neat, orderly, and well kept in a classroom. However, sometimes you just have to experience the messy side of living. Children can do just that through "messy book" selections such as those in this Book Corner. I have reached back in time for these selections to share some well read favorites. Children will delight in the messes created and the unusual cleanup solutions.

PURPLE, GREEN AND YELLOW

by Robert Munsch (Annick Press) tells what happens when Brigid gets colored markers after promising she will not write on the walls; the floors, and herself. But...something goes wrong!

BEFORE READING, ask children what they think the story will be about from the picture on the cover of the book and its title. Who do they think the main character will be?

AFTER READING: ask children, *what they* think "super-indelible-never-come-off-till-you're-dead-and-maybe-even later" colored markers are? Have children tell you how Brigid covered up all the purple, green, and yellow so her mother wouldn't know she had colored herself. Did it work? Why or why not?

ACTIVITIES

◆ Provide children with a variety of markers. Discuss what "rules" you could make as a class for using markers.

◆ Work with the math involved in the story. Brigid's mother bought her 500 of each kind of marker. Help children realize how many markers this would be. Use inexpensive drinking straws to help illustrate the amount.

◆ Draw a picture of Brigid (outline) on a dry-erase board using a permanent marker. Allow children to color her all over with dry-erase pens, being as creative as they wish. Then dry erase cloth can be her "bubble bath" that makes her invisible.

◆ Have purple, green, and yellow paint at the easel for children to create pictures.

HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON

by Crockett Johnson (Harper & Row) is about a little boy, one purple crayon, and a vivid imagination that all join forces to tell a story.

BEFORE READING, have an assortment of crayons in a basket. Ask children to select their favorite color. Supply sheets of newsprint. Allow children the freedom to draw anything they wish using only one crayon. Talk about the drawings. Do they tell a story? Write a title on each paper using the book title format (for example, *Billy and the Green Crayon*).

AFTER READING: ask children to name some of the things that Harold drew. Ask children "*Why did Harold draw them? Harold took a trip in the story. Was it a real trip or a make-believe trip? Why? Where did he go? What did he do? What do you think Harold might have been drawing on?* (bedroom wall and floor) *Do you think that was a good idea? Why or why not? What else could he draw on?*

ACTIVITIES

◆ If you have an available long wall (for example, the hallway) hang a continuous sheet of newsprint. Allow children to begin at one end and freely draw to the end of the paper or until they want to quit.

◆ Encourage children to tell a story as they draw. Write the script for the story as they tell it.

◆ Provide a dry-erase board and a purple dry-erase pen. Encourage children to draw what Harold drew as the story is retold or to freely draw what they desire. The board can be erased for the next artist.

OH, WERE THEY EVER HAPPY!

by Peter Spier (Dell Publishing) is about three children who undertake the job of painting the outside of their house as a surprise for their parents. Oh, were they ever happy!

BEFORE READING: ask children, *"Have you ever watched or helped someone paint the outside of a house? Is it a big job or a little job? Why? Tell us about it. What kind of equipment and supplies do you think you need to paint a house? Do you think it would be a messy job? Why?*

AFTER READING: ask children if they think this story was true or make-believe. Why? The last picture of the story shows the house and yard with the sentence, *"Oh were they ever happy!"* Ask children to tell you what their families would say?

ACTIVITIES

- Bring a large box (appliance box) and a variety of paints and brushes to paint the box. Encourage children to take turns painting until the whole house is painted. Keep the house as a play center.
- Encourage children to experiment with a variety of colors of paint at the easel and to discover what happens when paint runs down the paper.
- Provide shallow trays of paint and a long sheet of newsprint. Children can walk barefoot through the paint then onto the paper to make tracks. Compare the sizes of tracks made.
- Look closely at and discuss the illustrations. What story can be told by just looking at the pictures?
- As a class write an *Oh, Were They Ever Happy!* book using a different situation. (for example: bathing a dog, planting a garden, baking a cake) Illustrate your book.
- Take photographs of your classroom when it is particularly messy. Take photographs when it is clean. Create a poster using the title *Oh, Are We Happy!* and the photos to help children remember to clean up their messes.

THE CAT IN THE HAT

by Dr. Seuss (Random House) is a classic book by the late Dr. Seuss with whimsical, rhyming examples of "messy" fun. Children always delight in the sing-song rhythm and clever pictures of the Cat in the Hat.

BEFORE READING: pretend you are sitting looking out the window on a cold rainy day. How will you have fun? There's nothing to do. Do you have any ideas? With a thump and a bump, in walks a Cat in a Hat. Now will you have fun?

AFTER READING: ask children, *"Did the children in the story end up having fun? Why or why not? Were they happy to see the cat? Why or why not? Did the cat go away and leave the house messy? What did he do? What help did he have?"* The last page of the book says *"Should we tell her about it. Now what should we do? Well....what would you do if your mother asked you?"* What would your children do? Why? What is special about the words in the story? (rhyme) Find rhyming words on each page.

ACTIVITIES

- Read *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back.* Compare the two stories. Discuss the mess made in the second book and how it was cleaned up.
- Provide a variety of construction materials to encourage children to create their own cleaning machine such as the one used by the cat to clean up the messy house. Allow them time to tell, write, or dictate a story about their machine.
- Make an interactive bulletin board or learning center with a large Cat in the Hat and each little cat A-Z. Have children order from A-Z or largest to smallest little cat.
- Discuss what very important safety rule children should have followed when their mother was away. (Don't allow strangers in.)
- Have a messy room time then play "Cat in the Hat" cleaning up. Everything goes back in its place before mother (teacher) comes home (into the room or opens eyes).

MAKING SPAGHETTI—A VERY MESSY PROJECT

by Joyce Arsnow

Messiness, per se, is not enough of a reason to "make a mess." Neatness represents the product, not the process. Usually, what people see is the neat end product, but not the struggle that represents the process of producing a painting, a building, or a piece of writing.

Critical thinking skills and problem solving, repetition, and the completion of a process are the ingredients that result in a successful product, regardless of the age of the student.

Even though "the messier the better" is a catch phrase for many teachers of young children, the desired components of a well-thought-out project should have built into its process, or orderly steps, points of contact to help children make order out of their world. What children learn from one process should apply to other processes. Every project, messy or not, should have a reason for its presentation.

"Making Spaghetti" is a good example. The product of the process is the creation of a plate of paper "spaghetti" complete with "tomato sauce" and "grated cheese." Fantasy play, following directions, comparison and contrast, collaboration, and cooperation are some of the reasons to include this messy and fun project in your curriculum.

INTRODUCE THE PROJECT

Prepare children for this zany project by introducing them to Tom Glazer's song-story, *On Top of Spaghetti* (Doubleday). Show children samples of spaghetti and pasta. Let them make discoveries as to their relative properties, such as length, size, volume, smell, appearance, and touch.

For comparison and contrast, for example, tap an accompaniment of rigatoni and/or large shells to a simple tune such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Ruffle long spaghetti on a table or the back of your hand and encourage children to tell if the sounds are the same or different.

MAKING PRETEND SPAGHETTI

Ask children if they would like to make pretend spaghetti. How will we do it? Try to elicit some ideas, but have ready a large amount of newsprint, such as that used at the easel, cut into "spaghetti." This is a perfect way to use up scraps of newsprint. DO NOT use computer paper as its sharp edges may cut the children.

You'll Need: ✱ newsprint cut into spaghetti ✱ soap powder ✱ water in a pitcher ✱ large bowl ✱ red and brown liquid paint ✱ sturdy picnic plates ✱ wooden spoons

This is very "hands on!" Children mix the ingredients—paint, soap powder, water— in a bowl until the sauce looks right—delicious, just like Mother makes. Ask how it feels—hot, slimy, cold, gucky?

When the sauce is ready, children put handfuls of the prepared spaghetti onto their plates and ladle out the sauce, mixing it thoroughly with their hands. A little extra soap powder, and *voila*—grated cheese! This part of the process is very interactive and lots of fun. It is an opportunity to observe how children use listening skills, collaboration, and cooperation to work through a process towards a known end product (a plate of "spaghetti").

Afterwards, go over the process with children. Write out the steps. Is it OK to get messy? Could they make the spaghetti without getting messy?

This project is useful at Halloween to help children define what is real and what is not. Serve real pasta for snack to concretize "real."

SQUISH, ROLL, PAT AND STIR

by Susan M. Root

Cooking activities provide your classroom with a "sensory cafeteria." Imagine all your little ones lined up with their cafeteria trays as they explore food experiences. First, they "load" on the senses of sight, smell, and touch as they investigate the ingredients. You can encourage awareness of texture, color, size, and shape as they look, smell, and touch the ingredients. The sense of hearing is "loaded" on their trays as they listen for liquids, hear the sounds of the utensils, and set the timer to signal when everything is ready. Lastly, children will see, smell, touch, and taste the finished product. What a great way to develop sensory awareness!

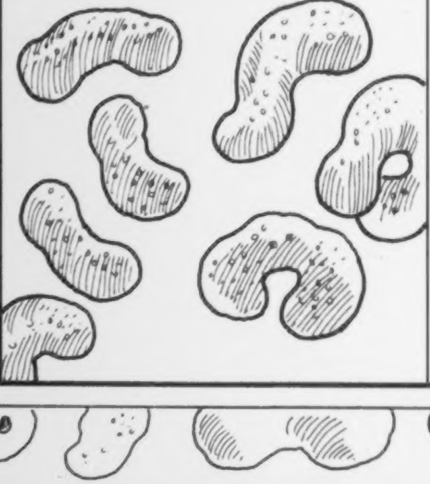
Here are three recipes that encourage children to measure, mix, squeeze, squish, and be "messy" while enjoying the cooking experience.

SOFT PRETZELS

What You'll Need: 1 pkg. yeast ✻ 1-1/2 cups warm water ✻ 1 tsp. salt ✻ 1 Tbsp. sugar ✻ 4 cups flour

What to Do:

1. Mix above ingredients together and stir.
2. Divide into 12-15 portions. Allow children to shape in any way they like.
3. Brush with egg white and sprinkle with salt.
4. Place on greased baking sheet and bake at 425°F for 12-15 minutes.

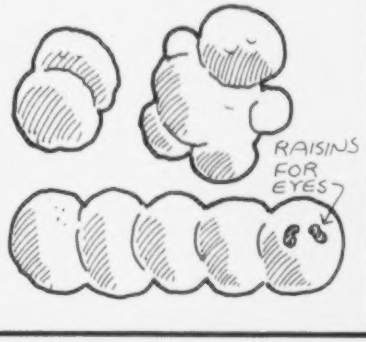


BREAD DOUGH SCULPTURES

What You'll Need: 1 loaf of frozen bread dough ✻ flour

What to Do:

1. Thaw 1 loaf of frozen bread dough for each group of 8-10 children.
2. Place a small amount of flour on the table in front of each child. Let them shape their dough, pinching off pieces, rolling, squishing, and shaping the dough.
3. Bake at 375°F for about 8-10 minutes until lightly browned.



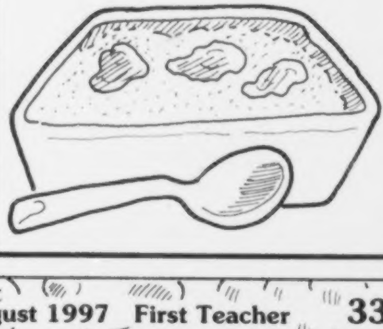
PUDDLE CAKE

Its fun to make "sand," "dirt," and "mud" as the ingredients are added.

What You'll Need: 1-1/2 cups flour ✻ 1 cup sugar ✻ 3 Tbsp. cocoa ✻ 1 tsp. baking soda ✻ 1/2 tsp. salt ✻ 6 Tbsp. oil ✻ 1 tsp. vanilla ✻ 1 Tbsp. vinegar ✻ 1 cup water

What to Do:

1. In an 8"X8" pan, place flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, and salt.
2. Add "puddles"—oil, vanilla, vinegar, and water.
3. Stir in pan.
4. Bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes.



BAKING POWDER

SCRUB-A-DUB-A-DUB

by Barbara F. Backer

Oh, the delight—to get thoroughly, messily, dirty. To sift dirt and sand through your fingers; to scoosh your toes in the mud. Oh, the pleasure of pushing paint with your fingers, pressing and pounding play dough, glopping gooey glue on a gift. And then reality sets in. Time to clean up!

This can be a pleasure or a chore. It all depends on attitude. We can help children develop positive attitudes by making cleanup fun. If we approach cleanup the same way we approach other basic concepts — presenting the learning through dramatic play, stories, and songs—it becomes a treat.

- Gather "shaker" containers with holes punched in the top. Put baking soda in these, and children will have a safe "cleansing powder" for scouring tables and other grimy surfaces.
- Mix two teaspoons of vinegar in one cup of water to make a safe liquid cleansing solution. Offer this in spray bottles so children can clean windows and other surfaces. Caution them to spray only the classroom fixtures, not each other.
- Children love to dust. Give each a soft cloth or an old sock to wear over their dusting hand, and assign two or three children to each learning area.
- Add washcloths and small bars of soap to the water table so children can bathe their babies. Put watered-down dishwashing liquid (1 tablespoon detergent to 1 cup of water) in detergent bottles so children can wash dishes, pots, and pans in the dramatic play area.

Once the room is clean, focus on getting children clean. Pantomime bathing while you sing this song. (Tune: "This Old Man")

Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub
Scrub my fingers, hands and arms
Scrubbing in my big bath tub.

Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub
Scrub my toes and feet and legs
Scrubbing in my big bath tub.

Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub
Scrub my hair and ears and face
Scrubbing in my big bath tub.

Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub,
Washing in my big bath tub
Scrub my back and belly, too
Scrubbing in my big bath tub.

Have children suggest words for other verses.

For more fun, read some of these splash-filled books about bathing:

- *Clean Enough* by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow) A child tells how he plays in the tub with soap and shaving cream. When it's time to end his bath, he realizes he hasn't even bathed yet. He climbs out anyway, deciding that he must be "clean enough."
- *Harry the Dirty Dog* by Gene Zion (Harper & Row) When he hears it is bathtime, Harry, the dog, runs away from home. After a day of adventure, he is lonely for his family and returns home where he begs for a bath.
- *King Bidgood's in the* Bathtub by Audrey Wood (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) Despite pleading by the knight, the queen, the duke, and others, King Bidgood won't get out of the bathtub. The page saves the day with a funny flourish.
- *Bernard's Bath* by Joan Elizabeth Goodman (Boyds Mills Press) There's a tubful of fun when Papa, Mama, and Grandma all get in the tub to persuade Bernard, the elephant, to take a bath.

Whether it's a messy room, messy hands, or a messy child, the fun doesn't have to stop when cleanup begins.

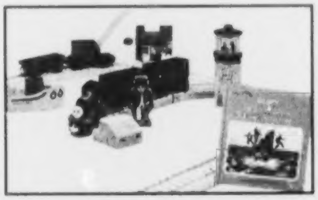
QUICK CLEANUPS

by Dr. Susan Peterson

Making a mess is often an important part of hands-on instruction. But helping children learn to "clean up" can be a necessary and enjoyable part of learning, too! Following are a few ideas to make the "cleanup" process (almost) as fun as the learning process!

- During the cleanup time, play music. Tell children they need to be completed with their clean up by the time the song is completed (if it is a tune they are familiar with). Children even enjoy cleaning up to classical music that has a lively beat. Encourage them to move with the rhythm or sing along quietly.
- Use shaving cream to clean table or desktops. Just a squirt of inexpensive shaving cream goes a long way, and children love to smear it around, making designs and letters. Before the cream dries, use damp sponges to wipe up the residue and then have children wash their hands thoroughly. A special bonus to this cleanup is that your room is left smelling clean and fresh. (NOTE: Before the clean up, be sure to instruct children in the importance of not getting the cream in their eyes.)
- Give children a colored dot or stamp their hand to group them into cleanup teams. Then tell them that they must listen carefully for their team's instructions. This activity can reinforce several concepts—colors, listening skills, sequencing (if the cleanup involves several steps), and, most of all teamwork!
- After an extremely grimy activity, such as fingerpainting or outdoor play, have children clean under their nails with the help of a fingernail brush. This specialized cleaning tool which can be purchased inexpensively at most department or drug stores, may be unfamiliar to most children but the novelty of using something new will increase their enthusiasm for what is often a routine chore. Follow-up with a discussion of other cleanup items we use—wash cloths for face and body, toothbrush for our teeth, nail clippers, etc. This could also serve as a great lead into a health and hygiene unit.
- Let children assist with outdoor cleanup. Why not turn a routine walk to the park into an environmental cleanup activity. Provide children with plastic bags to pick up litter or to clean up fall leaves. (Even Mother Nature can be messy!) At the end of the walk, let children toss their bags into a garbage can, giving a cheer as each child celebrates a cleaner neighborhood.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE



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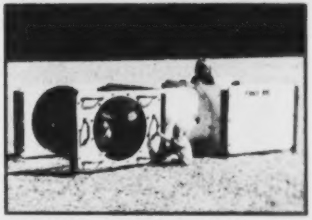

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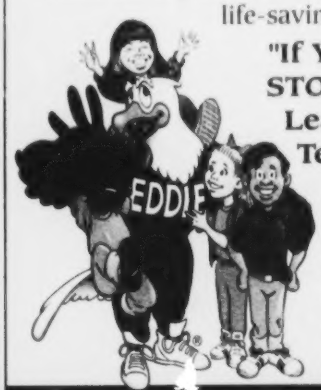

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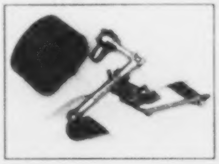

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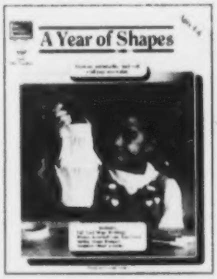

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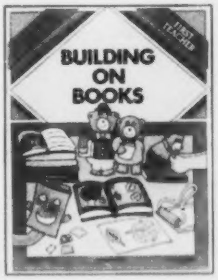

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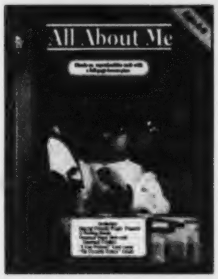

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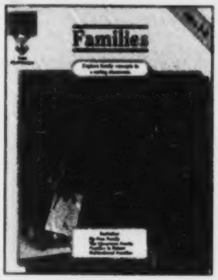

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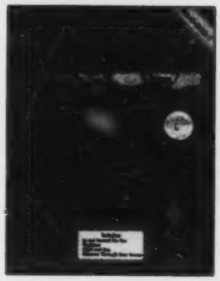

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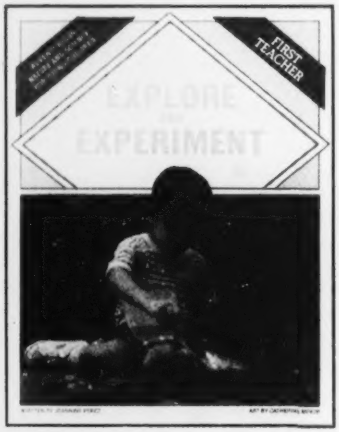

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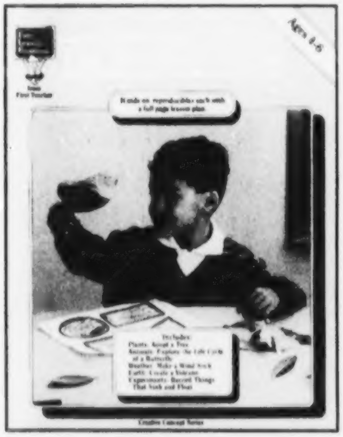

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

For teachers, fall cleaning is often more important than the traditional spring cleaning we do at home. Fall is a time of excitement and new beginnings for the children we teach, but this very important transition time can fall flat if we are not organized and ready for anything. If we plan in advance, we have the time and energy to handle separation anxieties, a million questions, the ups and downs of learning new routines, and everything else that comes in the door that first day with your children. This issue of *First Teacher* gives you ideas for planning your curriculum, setting up and stocking your classroom, and creating a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where children will look forward to learning.

We start off with articles that give you concrete suggestions for organizing yourself before school begins and throughout the year. This is a good time to look at your teaching goals and how you reach them. As Barbara Fischer says, it's a time to *"reflect, review, and refine."*

Preschool teachers used to spend most of their time before the first day of school decorating the classroom FOR the children. Today we realize that it's equally important that the children themselves feel a part of the process. Your classroom is their "place of business" **and** "home away from home." If you want them to feel truly comfortable there and also feel a sense of responsibility for its care and maintenance, then they have to feel a part of its creation. As Mary Beth Spann Minucci says in her article, it means, *"don't be too prepared."* Let children add the finishing touches wherever possible and keep up that responsibility all year long.

Creativity goes hand in hand with organization in teaching young children. We hope to spark your creativity with fresh ways to divide your room into centers, interesting ideas for displaying children's artwork (even the performing arts!), and new twists on your everyday curriculum and materials. There are articles on adding children's literature to all of your centers as well as creating an inviting "book nook."

"Expect the Unexpected" is an article that you'll want to save. When you work with young children, it is vital to have plans laid out for emergencies so that you can focus on their needs at these unusual times.

And don't forget to check out the upcoming *First Teacher* themes on this page. We look forward to helping you plan your curriculum and organize your classroom all year long!

IN THE COMING MONTHS:

1997

November/December:
Friends and Family

1998

January/February:
Explore Numbers and Letters

March/April:
Games for Growing

May/June:
Changes: Seasons, Growing Things, The End of School

July/August:
Beat the Heat

September/October:
Learning Centers

November/December:
Holiday Magic

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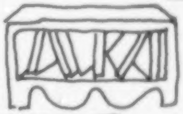
HELPFUL HINTS

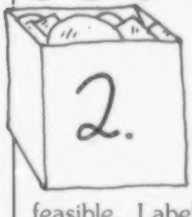
10 TIPS TO START YOUR YEAR IN STYLE

by Gail P. Jones

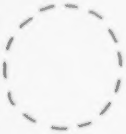
Stop. Get a pencil and paper. If you're going to get organized, you'll need a written plan. If you use your yearly curriculum and daily routine to help you determine your needs for the year, the classroom will be efficient and organized!

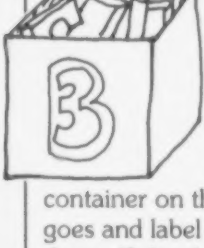
Book Corner



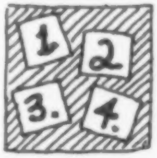


Plan your center areas and general storage of materials so that they are both safe and feasible. Label each center and area with words and pictures and add basic materials needed in each.



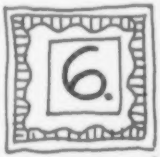


To encourage children to be able to clean up efficiently, outline the shape of the container on the spot where it goes and label it or put a picture there. (School supply catalogue pictures work great!)



As each center is introduced, roleplay with children how to behave in the center and what to do. Set up a system of bracelets, tickets, or sign-in charts at each center for efficient, independent use and for regulating the number of children who may be there at any given time.

Make plans to let children decorate their own table and overhead spots (perhaps theme-related each month). By putting corresponding numbers for each child in the rollbook, on overhead spots and mats for napping, naptime will be a breeze! (Add clips to the overheads and you can display and find each child's work in a second!)



Plan and post a calendar of events, daily schedules, lesson plans, class lists, emergency information, and routine procedures on a teacher's bulletin board. You may also include some of the same information on a parent bulletin board.

If possible, get uniform-sized cartons and label each appropriately for storing all materials and supplies. (If you're limited on space, they can be stacked to create a divider in the room!)

Send a letter home before the first day so that all children will bring to school: a labeled toothbrush, toothpaste, naptime blanket and toy, as well as a complete change of clothing for accidents.

Plan to have children create bulletin board borders and color in outlined title letters. Try to plan efficiently for reusing bulletin board backgrounds throughout the year.

Equip your teacher's shelf or desk with basic essentials—stapler, staples, paper clips, tape, thumbtacks, sticky tack, glue, markers, pens, paper, and a personal symbol that reminds you how terrific you are and why you're there!

ORGANIZE YOUR CLASSROOM—ORGANIZE YOURSELF

by Barbara Fischer

Suddenly there's a crispness in the air. Leaves drift on cool breezes and dance around your feet. Thoughts of curriculum, activities, books, new faces, and of course, that classroom still overflowing with summer swirl around your head.

Don't be overwhelmed; be organized. Start with yourself and your classroom will follow. Here are ideas to get you going.

✏ **Write it down**. Use a teacher's plan book to map out your monthly curriculum. Choose a theme for the month and divide it into weekly sub themes. Then, plan each day of the week. For example, if transportation is your monthly theme, your weekly themes might look like this.

Week One: Introduce the theme: Transportation—How we travel from one place to another

Week Two: How we travel on land

Week Three: How we travel on water

Week Four: How we travel through the air

Now write in your planner how you will implement your weekly theme day by day.

✏ **Organize your teaching area.** With your daily outline in hand, take a tour of your teaching area. Arrange your room to fit the times of your day. Is there an open space for circle time? A cozy corner for quiet reading? Be sure tables and chairs are out of the flow of traffic, but near storage and counter space. As you go through your room, eliminate unnecessary clutter and items that have been taking up space "forever." A little room arranging goes a long way to make your day flow smoothly.

✏ **Look at your teaching style.** What's your passion? Is it music? Art? Literature? Science? You will be involved in all of these, but let your interest shine through your teaching. If it is art, choose pictures that will appeal to children and place them in your room. Then you are able to:

Do math: Ask children to count the trees, people, birds, etc. in the pictures.

Teach language arts: Encourage children to make up a story using the picture as the setting.

Explore science: Do children know what time of year the picture portrays? How can children tell?

Extend story time. As you read books to children, note the illustrations. Are they watercolors or perhaps fingerpaint?

This same idea can be used with science, music, or literature. You must have a special interest that can be shared with your children. They will be richer for the experience.

✏ **Reflect, review, and refine.** Take a few moments at the end of your week for the "Three R's" :

Reflect: How did your week work for you? Think about what was successful. What activities would you rethink for next time? Rate your activities as to their effectiveness and note any changes that you might make for the following week.

Review: Check your materials list for the next week. Do you need to rearrange any activities? Keep to your schedule, but be flexible, too.

Refine: Keep in mind the long range goals and the immediate goals you have for your children. Weed out any curriculum clutter that creeps in to take away from these goals. Expand on those good ideas by thinking how they could be used in the months ahead.

You are the key to a great teaching year. Take time now to take charge of your day. The benefits that you will reap will more than repay you for your time in advance planning. Less stress and more teaching enjoyment will be yours all year long.

ORGANIZE FROM A-Z

by Susan Root

Where is that new idea? Where is my parent helper list? How come I can't find that book?

If you've experienced the frustration of trying to locate missing items, some basic organizational tips can help you keep classroom materials at your fingertips. There are many things that can be sorted alphabetically. Begin thinking in this way and it's as easy as ABC.

- Student files are obvious items to file alphabetically, whether it's in a file cabinet or file box. Filing by last name is the traditional way to do this.
- A filing cabinet might also contain other essential files or reference items again in alphabetical order. Why not take a letter a week, and clean out a small portion of your filing system? This will allow you to remove dated material, and by only tackling a letter a week, the job is a manageable one.
- Class lists can be useful when they are alphabetized by first name. This system gives young children an introduction to the alphabet as they wait their turn to be the leader, the plant waterer, the table setter, etc. Children can make sense of a list like this and it is an excellent introduction to written language in a very useful format. Classroom mailboxes or cubbies can be alphabetized by first names too. Children begin to recognize each other's names and the fact that other names begin with the same letter as theirs does.
- An expandable manila file folder (ABC's again) is a great place to store journal or magazine clippings with all those great ideas. Once filed, however, they are often never looked at. One solution to this problem is to think alphabetically when planning your daily activities. Even if you do not introduce letters on a formal basis, you can still plan activities based on a letter a week. In that way, you will remind yourself to look in a new letter file each week and your activities will remain fresh and interesting. This works as well with infants and toddlers as it does with preschoolers or school-age children. You don't need to mention the letter; just use this system as a reminder to check your files for new, old, or different activities each week.
- Books not currently in use can be stored alphabetically by author. Older children can even help you put books away just like in a real library.
- If you are fortunate enough to have a computer, the software can be filed alphabetically. Children may need help, but it will be worth the effort.
- A wonderful introduction to the alphabet is to make letter cans or bags. You might use drink mix cans with plastic lids, coffee cans, or fabric bags. You will need twenty-six and they should be labeled with the letters of the alphabet. Begin collecting small items that fit inside. You can also include a small photo of each child in the appropriate letter container. Besides providing you with an opportunity to introduce letters, there are many games you can play. Some favorites are:

The Guessing Game Give clues about each item and have children guess what it is before you pull it out.

"What's Missing" Memory Game Line up 4-6 items from a letter can, discussing each one as you do. Have children close their eyes and remove an object. What's missing?

"Tell a Story" Begin with *"Once upon a time..."* and pull one item at a time out of the container. Children can help you make up a story from the assortment of objects all beginning with the same letter.

Once you and your children begin thinking of the ABC's, the possibilities are endless. You'll have a system to keep you organized and your daily activities will be fresh and exciting each week.

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO!

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

Not so long ago, organizing a classroom for the start of school meant putting up decorative bulletin boards, straightening your desk, selecting a pretty TEACHER mug, and making certain you had a sensible pair of shoes to slip into when your feet were beat.

Well, things have changed.

While we still want our classrooms to be warm and welcoming places, we now understand the importance of including the children and their families in the process. And, because our teaching styles have shifted from teacher-directed to child-centered, there seems to be a whole lot more to organize. Here are some tips to help you stay sane as you put workable systems into place.

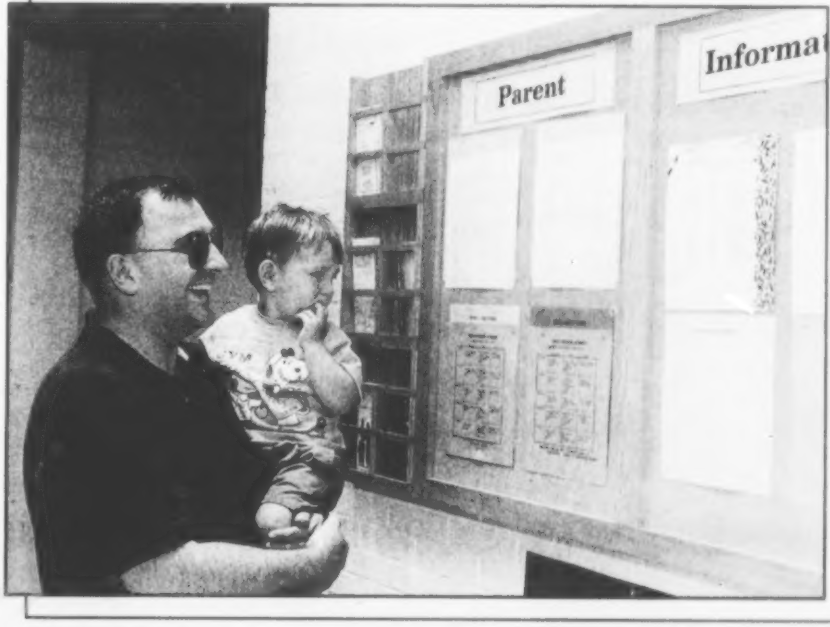
1 **Don't be *too* prepared.** Instead of having everything ready the minute children walk in the door, leave some things unfinished so they can help make the room their own. For example, while you might plan a beautiful "Welcome Back to School" display complete with children's names, you might also try covering a few bulletin boards with colorful paper and leaving them blank and border-free. When children arrive, they can paint or print on boarders and fill the interior space with artwork, photos, etc.

2 **Discard or replace any broken toys.** But don't let go of playthings last year's group didn't find interesting. Each class tends to form different attachments to playthings and materials. What last year's class found boring, this year's group may love.

3 **Make a trip to the storage room.** You can often unearth buried treasures there that will help your room sparkle.

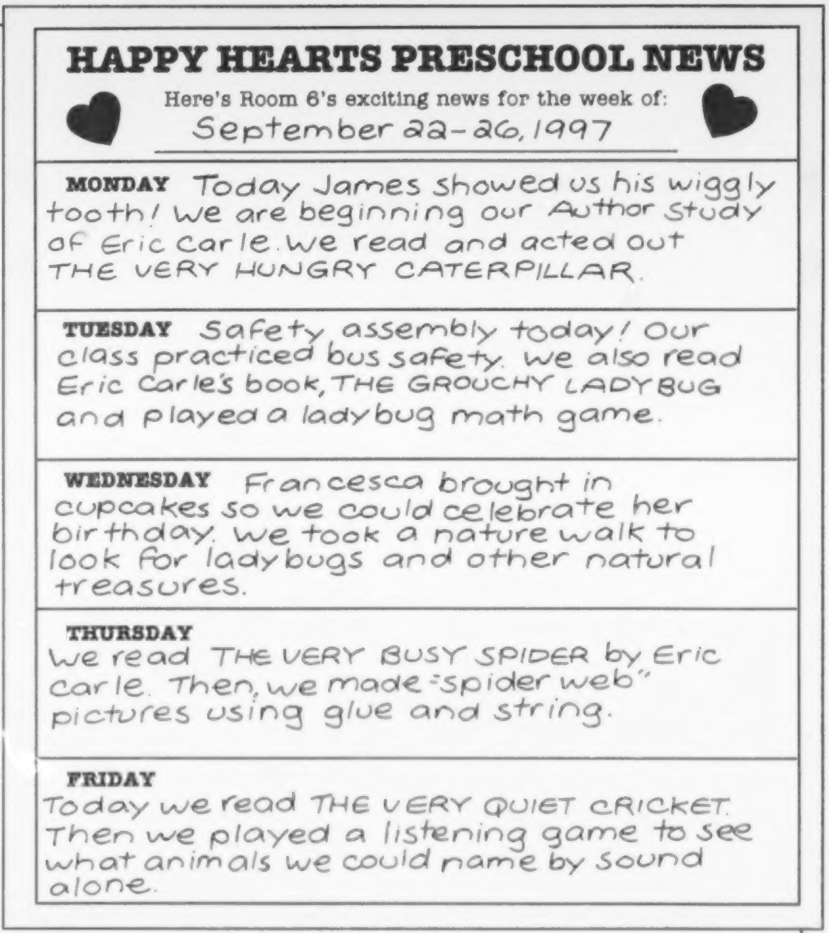
4 **Make a trip to the library.** Then check out beginning-of-the-year, getting-to-know-you books such as, *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen (Macmillan) and *Timothy Goes to School* by Rosemary Wells (Dial). Also, pull books related to the first theme you plan to explore. Then, use the books to plan a literature-based theme.

5 **Set up a "Family Communication Center."** Stock it with books,



magazines, articles, and even games and manipulatives parents and other caregivers may borrow to use at home with their children. (Tip: A hallway center works well because parents can take and return materials without interrupting classroom happenings.)

6 Prepare a system of home-school communications. For example, you might want to set up a newsletter letterhead in your computer, and you might want to purchase some of those cute die-cut teacher notes for everyday communications. One easy way to do a newsletter is to divide a piece of paper into six horizontal sections. Place the name of your newsletter in the top section, and the days of the school week in the remaining five. Then, each day, recount for families one or two special classroom happenings. Incorporate one or two of the children's names into the newsletter each day (checking off the names from your class list, so the names are evenly rotated). Or, children can take turns acting as a reporter, dictating a news report for you to record. Be sure to give each reporter her own special byline.



HAPPY HEARTS PRESCHOOL NEWS

Here's Room 6's exciting news for the week of: September 22-26, 1997

MONDAY Today James showed us his wiggly tooth! We are beginning our Author Study of Eric Carle. We read and acted out THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR.

TUESDAY Safety assembly today! Our class practiced bus safety. We also read Eric Carle's book, THE GROUCHY LADYBUG and played a ladybug math game.

WEDNESDAY Francesca brought in cupcakes so we could celebrate her birthday. We took a nature walk to look for ladybugs and other natural treasures.

THURSDAY We read THE VERY BUSY SPIDER by Eric Carle. Then, we made "spider web" pictures using glue and string.

FRIDAY Today we read THE VERY QUIET CRICKET. Then we played a listening game to see what animals we could name by sound alone.

7 Use classroom furniture to define the spaces you will need.

◆spaces for whole group meetings and movement
◆spaces for small and individualized work
◆quiet spaces
◆messy spaces
◆stationary and rotating learning centers
◆space for whole group meetings and movement (listening, housekeeping, art, language arts, dramatic play, cooking, etc.)
◆ teacher/caregiver retreat

Plan out how you will rotate through the systems. One must-have resource for setting up such learning center systems is *Learning Centers: Getting Them Started and Keeping Them Going* by Michael Opitz (Scholastic Professional Books).

8 Organize your desk and teacher supply closets. Once your program begins, you'll find these jobs much harder to squeeze in.

9 Don't forget to treat yourself to some teacher creature comforts such as a cozy cardigan, a tin of your favorite teas and a box of cookies. You might even make certain you have a pair of sensible shoes to slip into when your feet are beat. Some things never change.

PEOPLE, PLACES, & SPACES

by Susan A. Miller

A pre-schooler enjoys sitting on the floor in the block area building a long stretch of highway. At eye level, the teacher pins a notice about a field trip on the parents' bulletin board. In the big rocking chair, a Foster Grandmother cuddles a three year old on her lap as they share a story together.

These places, spaces, materials, and equipment in the classroom environment are all organized according to the dictates of the uses and needs of the adults and children involved in the program. Essentially, the organization of people, places, and spaces falls into three categories: children's spaces, adult spaces, and a combination of adult/child shared spaces.

As you, your staff members, and your children begin to design the classroom environment, you need to answer some of the following questions.

WHO WILL USE THE SPACE?

Children's spaces Because children often sit on the floor to play, begin by measuring their space from the floor up. Considering their size, most of the space a few inches beyond the reach of children (other than climbing apparatus or slide) is of little interest or use to them.

Adult spaces People such as, teachers, administrators, support staff members, resource consultants, parents, and volunteers need organized space to function smoothly in the classroom. Frequently, this space begins where the children's space ends.

Adult and children's shared spaces During certain activities, for example story dictation, adults and children work on projects together. At other times, they might share materials and equipment, such as the record player or tape recorder.

WHERE SHOULD THE SPACE BE LOCATED?

With an eye toward fostering independence, it is important to place children's materials, such as manipulatives or dramatic play props, down low on open shelves for easy access. Child-sized tables and chairs facilitate children's comfort as they concentrate on puzzles and their interaction where they talk and eat snacks together.

Placing adult spaces higher in the room helps to address some safety issues. For example, a mat knife, sharp scissors, or children's medicines can be locked in a high cabinet. Privacy and security is ensured when confidential records are placed in a top file drawer or a teacher's pristine art markers and special foil paper are housed on a supply shelf out of children's reach.

Looking at efficiently sharing equipment and materials, children's and adult shared spaces are not usually separated, but located low or mid-range for easy accessibility. The computer might be placed on a low desk where children can play games on it; however, the teacher may also use it as children dictate journal entries for her to type.

After an initial design session, it will become apparent that you are looking at the children's space horizontally in a low position across the room; whereas, the shared space is in a low or mid-horizontal position and the adults' places are upper-mid to high horizontally. Vertically, the arranged spaces seem to reflect the size of the people occupying the space.

Sometimes, you cannot be as flexible as you wish in designing your classroom organization because of immovable structures (window, door, sink, built-in closets, etc.) Other times you may share a room with another group (cub scouts, Sunday School) which may desire a more open organization with a heavier traffic flow then you would like. And of course, you must be sensitive to mixing quiet (library) and noisy (blocks) areas or wet (water play) and dry (manipulatives) spots.

WHY DO YOU NEED THE SPACE?

Some functions of space are simple to determine: circle time usually occurs while children sit on a soft rug placed on the floor, the teacher-director conducts parent interviews at an adult-sized conference table, while a college volunteer tutors a child at a low-table in a secluded, quiet corner.

The location of other activities, for instance project work, is often more complicated to plan for. If children are painting a group mural, the paper might be placed on a tile floor or tacked to the back of some shelves. When an art resource consultant works on a long-term clay project with children, they need a low table for demonstrations and work surfaces along with a higher shelf to safely dry the projects. Parent volunteers involved in creating games must have adult tables and chairs in order to sit and to neatly cut and paste materials, as well as high storage shelves to house uncompleted projects.

Designing and organizing the classroom environment is an ongoing, continuous project. You, your staff members and children need to periodically evaluate who is using the space, where it should be located and why you need it. Try using a chart such as the one below to modify, adapt, enhance, and embellish these important people places, and spaces.

Books

Adult	Reference	high shelf
Shared	Theme related	interest table
Child	Old favorites	library area rack

↑ vertical ↑

Bulletin Boards

Adult	Emergency information	by wall phone
Shared	Interactive theme game	interest table
Child	Art work	child's eye-level art center

↑ vertical ↑

child (low)	child sized tables/chairs, easel, drying rack, art cart for children's supplies, smock hangers, collage box, art bulletin board, child size sink, clay bin	art center

← horizontal →

CENTER DIVIDERS

by Margery Kranyik

Not much room for centers in your classroom? Be creative! There are many ways to designate your activity areas without using up all your space. Consider the following space-saver designations. Be alert, however, to your local fire regulations about hanging objects and unique furnishings.

▶ **Tubes** Paper or fabric factories may have assorted sizes of tubes for you to use. Run either rope or twine through the tube, paint and label it, and suspend it from the ceiling. An outdoor gear store such as Eastern Mountain Sports has neon-colored rope to add color to your tube.

▶ **Beverage Holder** Attach plastic six-pack holders together to form a lattice-type structure. Use twine or heavy cord. Add color by having children weave crepe paper or ribbon through the holes. Suspend them from the ceiling. They make fine see-through dividers for the center of your room.

▶ **Shoe Bags** These may be attached to the back side of a bookcase, an easel, or cubbie shelf. They are portable and can be used for activity cards, paper and learning materials for your current theme project.

▶ **Folding Screen** These may be moved from place to place. Make them from the cardboard from large appliances cartons or build them from wood and fabric for a more permanent structure. Label with words or pictures.

▶ **Banners** Suspend these from the ceiling or hang them on a wall. Children can help paint the symbol for your theme or permanent center.

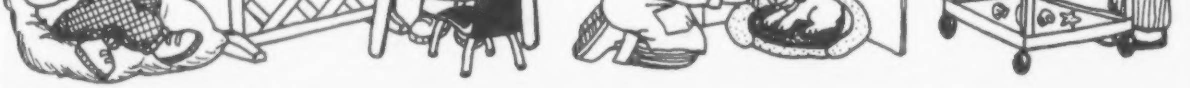
▶ **Mobiles** Hang signs from wire clothes hangers or suspend boxes with names, numbers or color symbols designating your center.

▶ **Clothes Line** Suspend theme materials, pictures or fabric to enhance a center and then use the line for drying art work.

▶ **Garden Trellis** Purchase one inexpensively from your local garden warehouse store. Have children help to paint it. Build a stand or sink it into a bucket of sand or quick-drying cement. It may also be attached to the wall to exhibit children's work or items for a science center.

▶ **Portables** Create portable or temporary centers with a wheeled serving cart, old suitcase or trunk, wagon or wheelbarrow. They may be used indoors or out and in the hall to extend your classroom.

The more centers you design, the more choices children will have for their learning activities. Many exciting and secure classroom experiences have occurred within a center made of a large pillow, a beanbag chair, or a large box.



EASY-TO-COLLECT

by Tania K. Cowling

Your classroom is a discovery zone; a place to explore, investigate, and create. It's a place where the process of learning is more important than the finished product.

You can create centers for Language, Math, Art, Science, and Dramatic Play. Integrate time into your schedule for groups of children to visit each center daily. Provide a wide array of open-ended materials and manipulatives where children can easily access these on their own. This area is a place where children can put things together, take things apart, create a new project, discover, and experiment.

COLLECTIBLES

Collectible resources can be obtained in your children's family closets, garages, flea markets, and yard sales. Ask for surplus items from local businesses. At the right, you'll find some ideas of "stuff" to enrich your centers.

Along with the basic five areas of study, you might think of creating centers for woodworking, a water table, blocks, or cooking. A gross motor area might contain outdoor toys arranged inside for rainy or cold day play. Be innovative and turn your classroom into "The Learning Center."

COLLECTIBLE STUFF FOR CENTERS

LANGUAGE

- All kinds of books
- Puppets and stuffed animals
- Felt board
- Large pillows for seating
- Author & Illustrator's works of art (posters & pictures)
- Old greeting cards and postcards
- Cassettes of stories and music
- Chart paper

MATH

- Scales for weight and measure; bathroom scale, measuring tapes, food scale, postal scale, yardsticks, etc.
- Items to sort; tile samples, coins, beads, rocks, shells, sample paint chips
- Items to match; patterned fabrics, textured fabrics, socks, gloves & mittens, wallpaper samples
- Other items to measure with; yarn, ribbon, belts, PVC pipes, wooden dowels

SCIENCE

- Plants: flowers, green leaf, cacti, ferns, small trees, etc.
- Nature books and magazines
- Observation tools: magnifiers, microscope, binoculars
- Items from nature to observe; rocks, acorns, leaves, twigs
- Small machines to take apart; clocks, toys, old small appliances (make sure to cut off the plugs), etc.
- Seeds and soil for growing plants
- Magnets and metal items

ART

- Reprints of famous works of Art (posters and postcards)
- Rubber stamps and stamp pads
- Variety of paper: vellum, rice paper, corrugated cardboard, freezer paper, sandpaper, wallpaper, brown butcher paper
- Painting tools: all sizes of paintbrushes, house painting brushes, rollers, toothbrush, pastry brush, feathers
- Paper materials: packing pieces, carboard tubes, boxes (all sizes), paper cups & plates
- All sorts of collage materials (save that junk!!!)

DRAMATIC PLAY

- Items for prop boxes; post office, pet store, travel agency, bakery, bank, and so on.
- Household items: pots & pans, tools & toolbox, clothing for dress-up, suitcases, empty boxes from foods
- Catalogs and brochures: grocery store, department store, travel brochures
- Paper goods: plates, cups message pads, play money, recipe cards, magazines

ORGANIZE CHILDREN'S CREATIONS

by Susan Entz

Children experience a creative explosion during the preschool years. Teachers can encourage both the process and the end products of this creativity by the way we treat their work. One way to accomplish this is through the public display of their creations.

DISPLAY OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL WORK

- Transform part of the room, hall, walkway, or entrance area into an "art gallery." Display children's work, interspersed with matted posters of famous paintings. Have each young artist name the work and sign his name to the title card to hang by the piece. Be sure to hang all art at the child's eye level.

- Frame artwork, using a real picture frame. Remove the glass and then glue a piece of corkboard to fit into the frame. Add a mat and then hang the picture. Place easel paper and drawing paper cut to fit just inside the frame in the art area. When a picture is done, have the artist sign his work and then hang it in the frame using tacks.

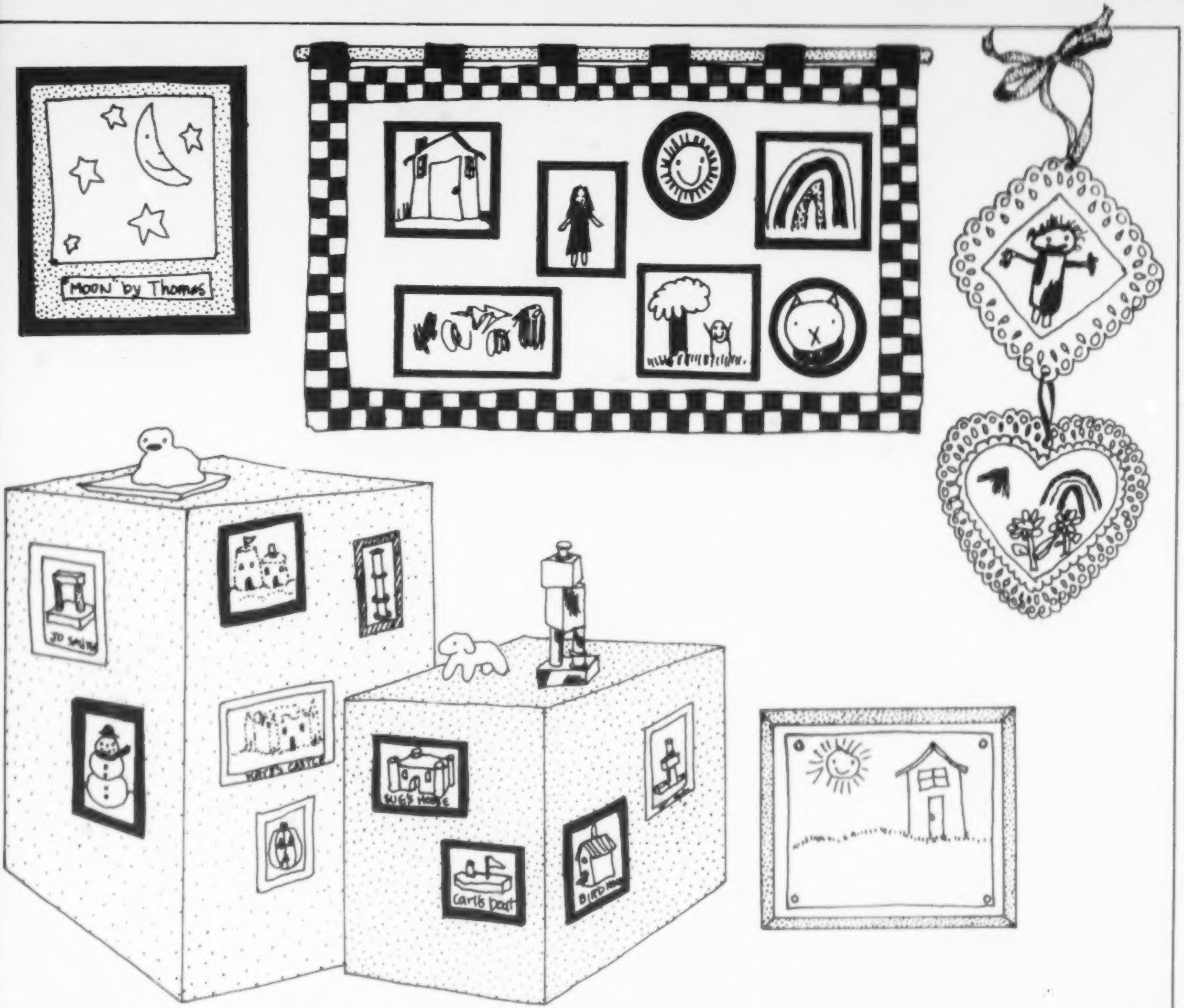
- Mat all work using construction paper or colored posterboard.

- Make simple but attractive mats by laminating the construction paper or posterboard and then simply insert the picture into this sturdy and reusable mat. These are simple and useful when displaying odd-sized drawings and paintings.

- Make an old fashioned, Victorian hanging display of small drawings or paintings. Mat the picture or back it with a paper lace doily. Then attach four or five pictures together with decorative ribbon and hang.

- A large banner display of art adds texture to the gallery. Cut and bind a yard of quilted fabric and sew two loops along the to edge. Pin or tape a picture to the cloth. Insert a rod and hang from the ceiling or wall.

- Transform a large packing crate into Panel Display. Cut the box along the long side and trim the edges. Spray paint the whole piece of cardboard and seal the edges with wide electrical tape in a complimentary color. Tape paintings and title cards to the board to make an attractive display.



3-D DISPLAY OF ART

Have children help you to change table tops and boxes into a formal display area for three dimensional art. Save clay creations, 3-D constructions, and wire work for the display. Place each on a colored posterboard base. Then make label cards naming the piece as well as the artist.

Preserve block designs, carpentry creations, and sandbox sculptures through photographs. Enlarge the pictures and display them with a short commentary from the artist.

PERFORMING ARTS

Sometimes a child's most creative expressions don't occur in the art area. Include the performing arts of music, dance, creative movement, puppetry, storytelling, and even dramatic play in your program.

Videotape children's performances as they occur. Replay these tapes once a week by inviting children to "go to the theater." Have children dress up in their finest duds from the dramatic play area and be ushered into the room set up as a theater. They will enjoy seeing their own performances as much as a Broadway production! Remember to share these videotapes with parents, too.

Photograph these activities as they occur and use the pictures to feature different performers. Develop a display featuring the photographs of famous musicians and the children in your class, each playing their instruments. Have a tape recorder in the area with selected pieces performed by each of the musicians pictured. Repeat the process with the other performing arts.

PLANNING FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING

by Barbara Backer

At the beginning of the school year when we are busy organizing our planning books, classrooms, bulletin boards, and closets, many of us forget about one of our largest learning areas—the outdoors.

Just like indoors, the outdoors can provide opportunities for exploring and interacting with materials. And just like indoors, we can design and manipulate the outdoor environment to enhance learning. We know that natural materials are perfect for learning, and the outdoors abounds with these.

- Use bricks or railroad ties to mark off a corner of the yard where children can dig in the dirt for bugs, worms, and other critters. Let children explore the differences in digging during warm seasons when the ground is soft and colder ones when the ground is frozen. Have a magnifying glass handy for examining children's finds, but keep this out of direct sunlight. Heat from the focused sun rays can start a fire!
- Set up stations for exploring wet or messy play. A dishpan makes a fine container for bubble solution and various blowers. Children can observe how bubbles behave differently in freezing weather and warm weather.
- Add funnels, clear plastic tubing, and pouring containers to the wet area. On other days provide watering cans, sieves, and colanders. Bring the baby dolls and their clothes outside so children can wash both. They can hang the wet clothing in bushes and learn about evaporation when the clothes in the sunshine dry more quickly than the clothes in shaded areas.

- A discarded wading pool is excellent for water and mud play. Designate special mud days when children bring bathing suits and change into these during outside play time. Add hoses and sprinklers and cherish the feeling of squishy mud between your toes. Use the hoses for washing up before going inside and changing into school clothes again.

- In winter months, use the wading pool as an area for snow digging and snow sculpture. Provide spray bottles of colored water for "painting" the snow.
- Plan an outdoor garden. Children observe the passage of time and learn about cause and effect when they plant bulbs in the fall and see their growth in the spring. Add seeds in the spring, and observe and measure plant growth. Plant quick-growing vegetables like leaf lettuces, radishes, and beans so children can taste the fruits of their work.

- Children automatically engage in dramatic play outdoors. Playgrounds abound with sounds like these: *"Come on, dalmatians, run this way. We can hide here from the bad guys." "Here's a tower we can climb. We can save the people inside."*

☼ Support children's dramatic play by providing materials they can move around the yard and build with. Tire stores will donate discarded tires, and appliance stores may provide huge cartons that can be carried, stacked, crawled over and through, and duct-taped end-to-end to make long tunnels. In addition to having lots of fun in dramatic play, children develop motor skills while playing with these items.

☼ Include the outdoor area in every day's lesson plans. Set up an area for making kites or airplanes and fly them when they are completed. Add theme-related props to the sandbox. Bring out sidewalk chalk so children can draw pictures, write "notes," and experience colors.

☼ Provide pencils, markers, and paper so children can draw their outdoor observations. What does the world look like from the top of the climbing bars? How does the sliding board look when you are lying under it on your back?

☼ Bring music outside where children have lots of room to explore movement. Provide streamers to enhance movements. Watch children experience opposites when they (or their streamers) move fast and slow, high and low, up and down, under and over.

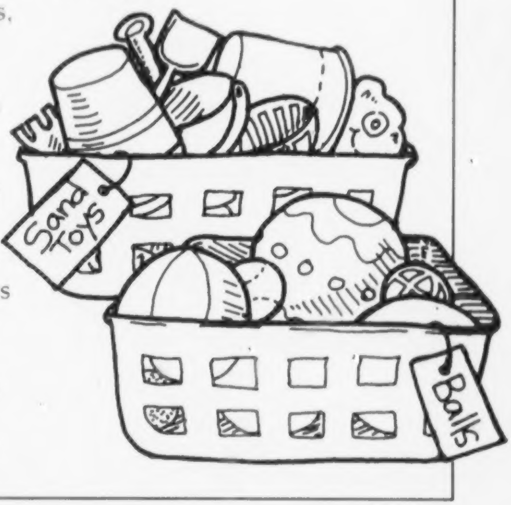
☼ Observe children's play carefully, then add elements to support their changing interests. If they become interested in space and rockets, add office supply store boxes and tape for building rocket ships. If the circus comes to town, add hula hoops for circus rings and watch children create circus acts.

☼ Plan an area to store outdoor equipment. Store balls, shovels, water table implements and other small items in plastic laundry baskets that have holes in the sides and bottom for draining. Have a different-colored basket for each type of equipment, and use a permanent marker and craft foam to label each basket. Use twist-ties to attach labels to the baskets.

Remember to do a safety check everyday before children go outside. If you make it a routine to do this as you arrive at the building each day, you won't forget this important job. Look for broken glass, and check to see that cushioning materials under climbing bars and swings and at the end of the sliding board are loose enough to cushion falls. Remove sticks and branches that might have fallen from trees overnight. Check riding equipment to be certain all joints are secure.

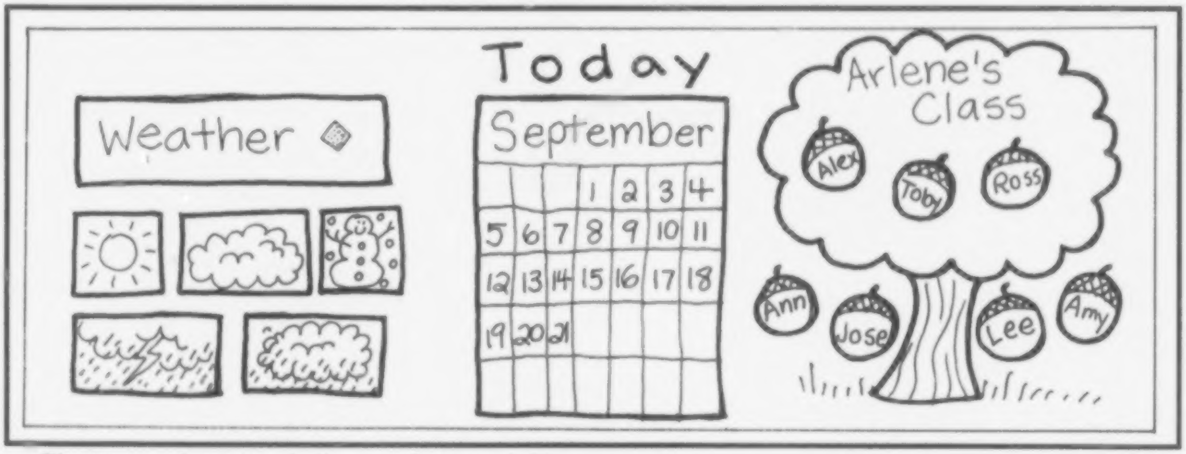
Your planning will pay off. Just like indoors, when children have a variety of interesting and complex materials to interact with and explore, discipline problems diminish and learning abounds.

Planning for outdoor activities shows our belief that all environments can be learning environments. Watching the results of that planning proves this belief.



YEAR-ROUND BULLETIN BOARDS

by Gail P. Jones



Planning and creating bulletin boards can be fun if you get organized! Divide up the responsibility for creating the bulletin boards in your room throughout the year with your co-workers. If you don't have a "coworker," think of ways parents and families can create a board and, plan to use children's work as much as possible! Children can create theme-related borders for each new unit if you put strips of paper in the art center. Have available desired objects or photos of them that you want children to draw on the strips.

Try to use children's work and photos throughout the year with regular changes to spark interest! Add pictures of new items to the bulletin board and challenge children to find them in the room.

How many bulletin boards should you have? Ideally.....lots! Hopefully, they are low enough to be used by children for hands-on learning games that are theme-related. Be creative in using pockets, Velcro, magnetic tape, curtain hooks, and brass fasteners! Use sequencing activities, matching games, and categorizing for learning fun. Add counting and other skills such as recognizing beginning sounds, etc. whenever possible.

Another bulletin board with the helpers, weather, and calendar on it can be used for group time. A "sign-in" chart can give you the attendance at a glance! By laminating helpers for each theme and printing the names on them afterward, they can be reused each year by removing the names with nail polish remover.

You should also have a parents' board for daily notices and requests. Try to include a "What We Did Today" section printed by the teacher and illustrated by children. (This is a great closure activity for afternoon group time!) A bulletin board outside your door with philosophy, goal, lesson plans, yearly curriculum, and daily schedule is terrific for informing visitors or prospective new parents without taking your time away from children. And, be sure to have a teachers' board with all necessary information readily available.

The backgrounds for bulletin boards can be paper, wrapping paper, fabric, foil, or whatever you choose. Try to keep them cheerful, attractive and *reusable!* Consider using a basic color for each season (yellow for four months, Sept.—Dec.) Or, cover last month's background paper with a new one and go back to the original one at a later date. "*Waste not, want not.*" Create titles for your bulletin boards using upper and lower case letters as well as left to right and top to bottom arrangements so that children learn these necessary pre-reading skills. Try to use attractive colors and, again, laminate for durability.

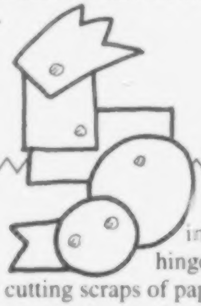
Bulletin boards can be one of your best teaching tools not to mention, motivations, self-esteem builders and fun learning experiences. Remember to plan ahead, get help from coworkers, children, and parents and, take a picture of all boards before changing them so that you'll have a visual record.

FRESH EVERYDAY IDEAS

Don't Know What to Do? Try Something New!

by Jeannine Perez

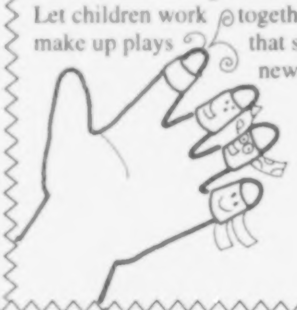
Creativity can be simply using our ability to look at everyday things in a new way—seeing the unusual in the ordinary. By encouraging children to use all five senses and their own imagination to look at new possibilities for everyday objects or for doing repetitious tasks, you also encourage problem solving. You help children develop observation skills, and creativity. You might begin this creative process by setting out some of the "art junk" or scraps that are cluttering up shelves in your classroom and challenging children to find new uses for each item. The suggestions here cost little or nothing and can be adapted or added to regular routines.



NEW Ways to Use Art Materials

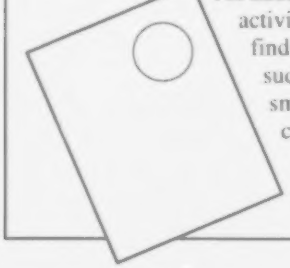
Dump out your boxes of paper scraps onto a table. Talk about all of the basic shapes, then find examples of those shapes in the room or on a walk, and help children cut circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles from the different colors of paper. Give each child a small pile of the colored shapes and a large sheet of paper. Challenge children to use their paper shapes to make a circus clown, an imaginary animal, or a landscape picture. Later, you could bind the pictures together into a booklet or border the room with them.

Make a puppet out of an unusual (scrap) object. You might use a disposable cup, a broom, a potato, a sponge, paper sacks, or a pine cone. You could also make finger puppets from strips of paper you've fastened into a ring for each finger. Let children work together to make up plays that star their new puppets.



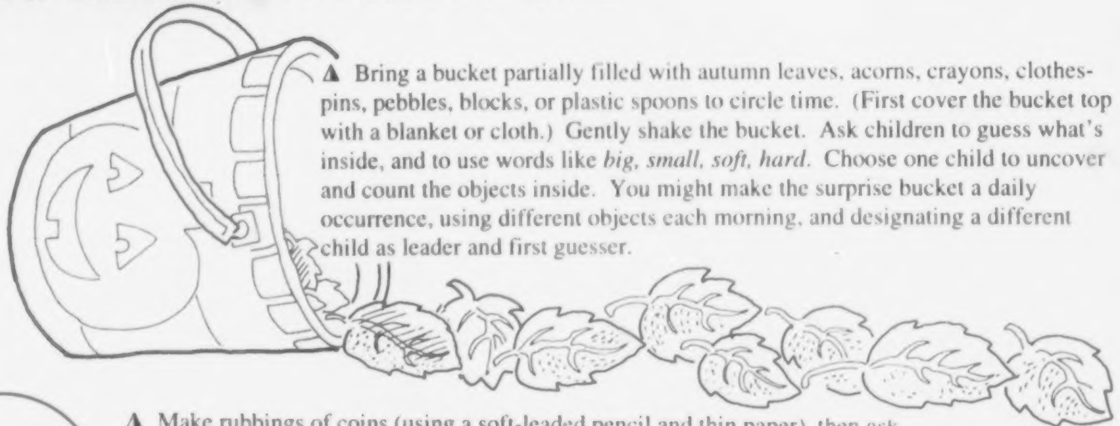
Create interesting hinged shapes by cutting scraps of paper into many odd shapes, then coloring, decorating, and connecting them with brass paper fasteners. Display these abstract sculptures on a wall space, bulletin boars, or window. Make the project an interactive one. Encourage each child to move parts of the hinged shapes until they see a picture, then make up poems or stories about the pictures seen in the shapes.

Give each child a paper that has an odd shaped hole in a different location on the paper. Challenge them to use the hole as a beginning for a picture. It might be an open mouth, a window, or the entrance to a cave. An added benefit to this activity is that children find that even mistakes such as holes or smudges on drawings can be transformed into art.

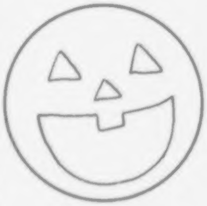


Give everyone an unmatched old sock. With materials from the art bin and glue, challenge children to see what each can make from an old sock. Help then roll and stuff one sock into another for a soft ball, make puppets, dolls or stuffed animals, or cut strips around for headbands or wristbands. For a science project, they could fill an old sock with kitchen (organic) garbage and items from the art waste can, then predict what will happen to each object when the sock is watered well and buried for a month in your garden. Make a chart with your predictions on one side and the results a month later on the other side.

NEW **Math** *Materials*

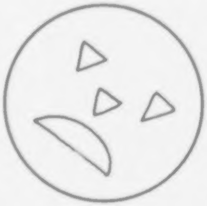


▲ Bring a bucket partially filled with autumn leaves, acorns, crayons, clothespins, pebbles, blocks, or plastic spoons to circle time. (First cover the bucket top with a blanket or cloth.) Gently shake the bucket. Ask children to guess what's inside, and to use words like *big, small, soft, hard.* Choose one child to uncover and count the objects inside. You might make the surprise bucket a daily occurrence, using different objects each morning, and designating a different child as leader and first guesser.

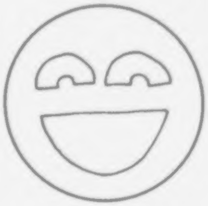


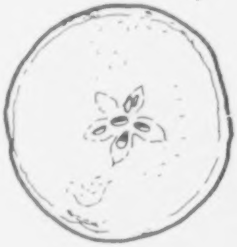
▲ Make rubbings of coins (using a soft-leaded pencil and thin paper), then ask someone to help you label each coin's picture with its name and how much it is worth. Cut out the coins, and use them to set up a store or restaurant.

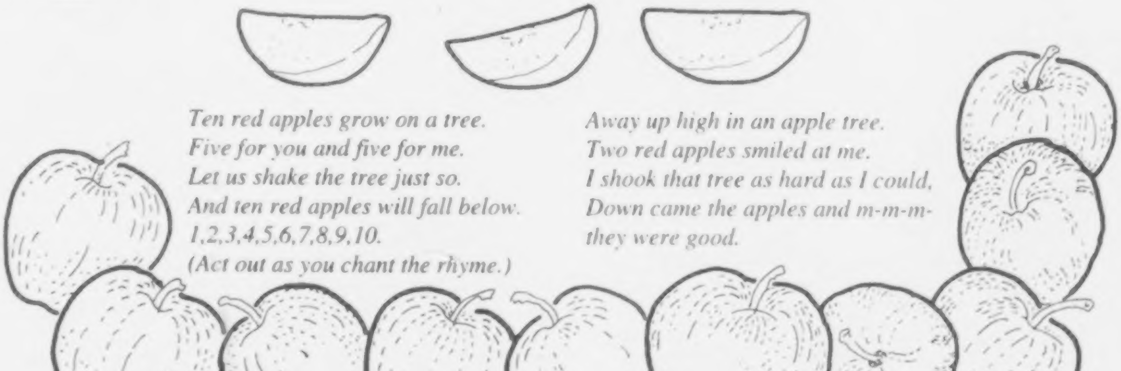
▲ Borrow round plastic lids from different containers in the kitchen. (Or use the extra lids that invariably collect on the shelf.) Trace around them and use crayons or markers to turn them into a family of pumpkins. Which pumpkin is the funniest? The scariest? The best dressed? Create a prize category for each pumpkin and ask children to award prizes by drawing and cutting out paper ribbons or using a stamp (to be sure that each pumpkin receives a prize).



▲ Have apple slices for snack. Learn more about the apples before you eat them. Use a tape measure to determine the distance around your apple. Look around the room and name four things that are bigger than the apple. Find four things that are bigger than the apple. Then find four things that are smaller than an apple. Cut the apple apart horizontally and look at the star inside. Completely remove the core after predicting the number of seeds that will be found inside and count them. Plant the seeds in small pots, or glue them to a paper in a design. Expand children's observation by comparing the appearance of fresh apple and peach slices, or the textures and tastes of apple slices with apple sauce. After eating the apples, do fingerplays to celebrate their taste.







Ten red apples grow on a tree.
Five for you and five for me.
Let us shake the tree just so.
And ten red apples will fall below.
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10.
(Act out as you chant the rhyme.)

Away up high in an apple tree.
Two red apples smiled at me.
I shook that tree as hard as I could,
Down came the apples and m-m-m-
they were good.

Scavenger HUNT

Soft
HARD
SHARP
Red

Make use of that large unsightly pile of old magazines. Label large sheets of posterboard of heavy paper with categories: THINGS THAT ARE SOFT, THINGS THAT ARE RED, SHARP THINGS, etc. Then help children look for pictures that illustrate the descriptor. After a day or so, ask children to find pictures illustrating more abstract concepts like: FUNNY THINGS, SCARY THINGS, THINGS WITH WHEELS, LIVING THINGS, NONLIVING THINGS, THINGS MADE FROM PLANTS.

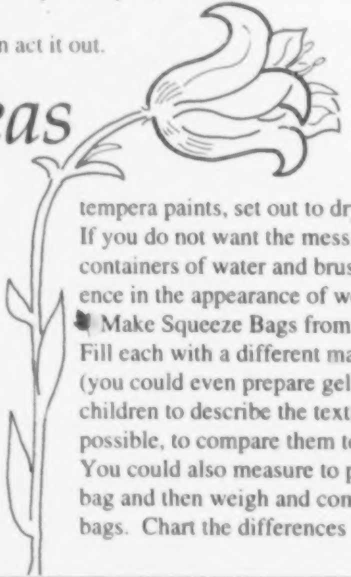
NEW MOVEMENT Ideas

- Ask your children *"How many ways can you get from here to there?"* (across the room, across the playground, etc.) Each child must think of a different method of travel; crawling, jumping, rolling, hopping, skipping.
- Play an imaginary ball game. Form a circle with your children. Tell each child to be ready to catch an imaginary ball and throw it back, or to another child. Decide with your group how big the ball is, and what color it is. Begin playing ball in slow motion, and then go around the circle faster and faster.
- Ask your children to join you and run in place while you all count to 100. Ask: *"Does running make you breathe harder? Can you feel your heart beating in your chest?"* Help your children find their pulse and try to count it.

What shape are you in? Give each child a descriptive word (tall, small, crooked, straight). The game is played somewhat like Statue Tag. Ask children to move around the room while you play music. When the music stops, everyone freezes into the shape and holds it until the music begins again.

- Ask each child to draw a picture of an animal and then act it out.

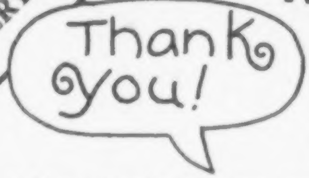
NEW Science *Ideas*



- Put something new and different in the water table; sand with water added to make castles mountains, or autumn leaves and watch them change as they dry. Make the water table an indoor garden by adding dirt or potting mix, then inserting rooted cuttings, seeds, or small plants. Decorate with rocks pebbles. You could also provide ears of dried corn, kernels, and corn meal. Move the water table to the art center and enhance fine motor skills by adding paper scraps and scissors and encourage your children to cut the scraps into very small bits to use later to make collages.
- Help children find smooth and interesting rocks and create cars, flowers, people, or animals. Paint with tempera paints, set out to dry, then decorate as desired. If you do not want the mess of painting, simply provide containers of water and brush and observe the difference in the appearance of wet and dry rocks.
- Make Squeeze Bags from small zip-locking bags. Fill each with a different material, sand, mud, salt, clay, (you could even prepare gelatin mixture in one). Ask children to describe the textures they feel, and if possible, to compare them to other textures or materials. You could also measure to put the same amount in each bag and then weigh and compare weights of the filled bags. Chart the differences in weights.

FRESH EVERYDAY IDEAS

NEW Language *Ideas*

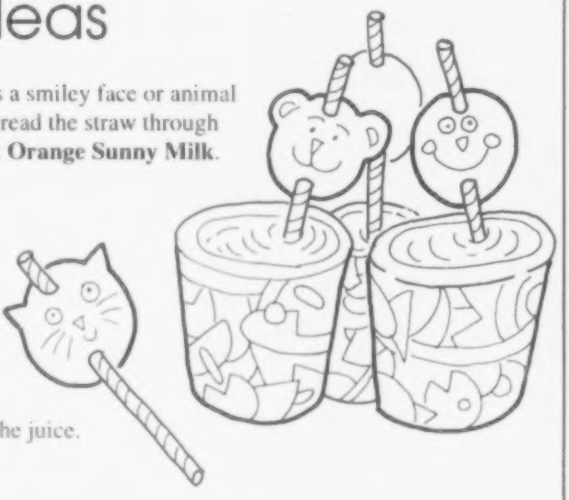


▲ Write PLEASE on one sheet of paper and THANK YOU on another. Read a familiar story and ask children to interject the words by pointing to the right sign and shouting the word whenever they think it's appropriate.

▲ Make a list of words starting with the same sound (for example: S words or M words). Put them together in a funny sentence or poem. *"Silly Sue made soupy sandwiches from soap and set them in the sun."*

NEW *Cooking* Ideas

▲ Make a **silly straw** for snack milk. Cut a small shape such as a smiley face or animal face from paper, punch a hole near the top and the bottom and thread the straw through the holes. Enjoy your morning snack and use the straws to drink **Orange Sunny Milk**.



You'll Need:

- 1 16 ounce juice of frozen concentrate (soft)
- 1/3 cup instant dry milk
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 10 ice cubes

What to Do:

Blend in a blender for a minute. Add more liquid if needed.
You can use any juice if it is not concentrated. Freeze cubes of the juice.

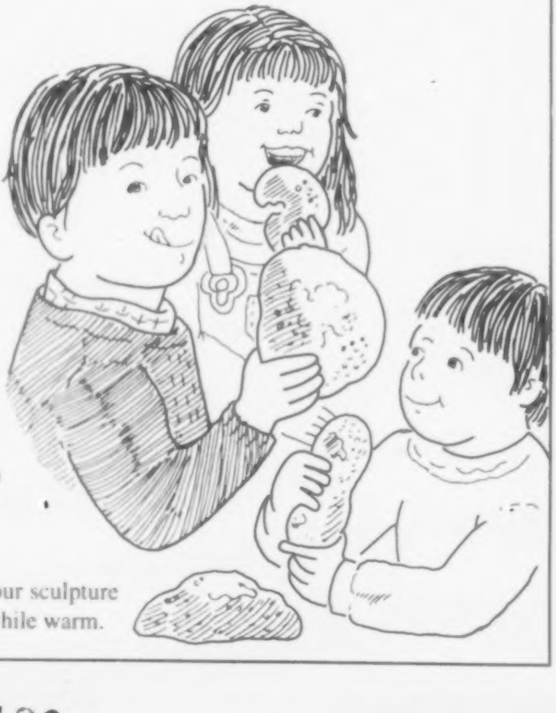
▲ **Bread Sculpture** (Make an edible sculpture.)

You'll Need:

- 1 package dry yeast stirred into 1 2/3 cup warm water
- 4 Tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup honey
- 5 cups flour
- waxed paper
- water

What to Do:

1. In a small bowl: 1 package dry yeast stirred into 1 2/3 cup warm water. Stir in 4 Tablespoons butter, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 egg, and 1/4 cup honey.
2. Add flour (about 5 cups in all), a little at a time.
3. Give each child a small ball of dough to pound and knead on a flour-covered piece of waxed paper.
4. Help each child form their kneaded dough into a flattened shape and then arrange everyone's bread shapes so they touch on a greased cookie sheet.
5. Brush the sculpture with a mixture of beaten egg yolk and water.
6. Bake at 350°F until brown (about 20-25 minutes). Admire your sculpture and compare the dough shape with the baked sculpture. Eat while warm.



SELF-ORGANIZATION

by Sherry Burrell

"Where is my coat?" "I can't find my lunch." "What do I do next?" "Am I finished?" These examples are just a few of the questions teachers hear from young learners on a daily basis. Children can and need to learn to be responsible for their behavior and work. Through simple check systems, children learn to set daily and/or weekly goals (depending on the age). To start, make a list of daily/weekly activities children can participate in (art, storytime, learning stations). Make sure you also include activities such as hanging up coats and book bags, storing lunches, and sharing toys. These types of activities can go a long way in helping children develop responsibilities.

At the beginning of each day/week, give each child a responsibility sheet with shapes, animals, or numbers that correspond to an activity. Let children color in the activity they want to accomplish. You may also highlight activities you want all children to be responsible for on any given day (picking up chairs quietly and carrying to the reading circle, not running in the hall, sharing). At the end of the day/week, young learners cross off the activities they have completed. When they turn in their sheets, they can spend a few minutes talking to you about what they accomplished and what they didn't. For example, Lauren remembered to hang up her coat when she came to school but she forgot to put her boots underneath it. What was the result? She lost recess time trying to find them. Shannon-Kate completed each learning station by the end of the week, but she forgot to bring a book to storytime. What was the result? She didn't get to have her story choice read aloud. On Monday, Tim completed his art project but he forgot to rinse out the paint brushes. What was the result? On Wednesday when he wanted to paint again, his brushes were unusable.

Children can make **Responsibility Sheets** to take home. Activities could be picking up toys, helping to set the table, or making their beds. Let students select two to three activities they wish to complete for a week. Have parents mark off the activity when it's completed and have young learners bring the Responsibility Sheets back to school. Again you can talk to them about their successes and where they need improvement. What activities did children do each day without their parents having to remind them? Did they forget to do anything? What happened when they forgot?

Over time this simple activity eliminates redundant questions in the classroom, teaches basic organization skills and responsibility, and reinforces basic concept skills (counting, shapes, colors).

Child's Name **Responsibility Sheet** Week of__________

I will put out plates for dinner every night.

M T W Th F Sa Su

I will put my books on my bookshelf before I go to sleep.

M T W Th F Sa Su

I will make sure that Fluffy (the cat) has water
in her bowl when I come home from shool.

M T W Th F Sa Su

Parents: please check off these activities everyday when your child has completed them.

LESSON PLANNING PRIMER

by Karen Stephens

A developmentally appropriate curriculum of activities should be responsive to and reflective of your group's abilities, current knowledge, and personal interests. Your job of lesson planning requires logical thought as well as creativity.

To make learning meaningful and relevant to children's daily lives, you should plan topics of study WITH children, not just FOR children. Experiences should allow children to delve into questions, concepts, and information from as many different angles or perspectives as they choose that are feasible, and as you deem viable.

Learning activities, which are compiled into lesson plans, facilitate and support children's growth—emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually. When setting the stage for children's investigations and explorations, you should provide a multitude of experiences which allow children to explore the world, research it, make sense of it, and then communicate their knowledge. Activities that you and children decide to pursue together should build on a basic foundation of knowledge, then gradually, build layer upon layer, into greater complexity and detail.

CHOOSE A TOPIC TO STUDY

The first chore in lesson planning is to decide on topic of study. Children themselves offer a wealth of topic suggestions, merely through the questions they ask. By talking with children with sincere interest, and by listening to them with intention, they can direct you to learning activities that will provide the most fertile ground for their overall development and growth.

By taking children's natural curiosity and questions seriously, you can capitalize on learning that will be most intrinsically motivating to children. By observing children's independent and self-initiated play, an endless array of topics of study can be discovered.

Sylvia Chard, in *The Project Approach: A Practical Guide for Teachers*, says teachers can determine if topics of study are suitable for young children by asking a series of questions. She poses them as follows:

How can a study of this topic:

▲ *build on what children already know?*

▲ *help children to make better*

sense of the world they live in?

▲ *help children to understand one another better?*

▲ *enable children to understand the value of literacy and numeracy in real life contexts?*

▲ *offer children ideas for dramatic play/representation?*

▲ *encourage children to seek sources of information outside school?*

▲ *facilitate communication with parents?*

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Balance and *inclusiveness* are key words in curriculum planning. To make sure your classroom curriculum is well rounded, and provides for a wide variety of styles (and rates) of learning, keep the following criteria in mind.

Do planned classroom activities facilitate, accommodate, or allow for:

▲ All areas of child development, including intellectual, emotional/social, and physical?

▲ learning in a variety of ways —oral, tactile, visual, and sensorimotor?

▲ participation by children of varying abilities and developmental levels?

▲ child-initiated investigation as well as teacher initiated guidance and coaching?

▲ open-ended learning led by children's interests and questions?

▲ problem solving independently as well as in a group?

▲ practicing and refining current skills?

▲ learning through spontaneous teachable moments?

▲ answering, with satisfaction, children's questions about how the world works and why?

▲ providing opportunities for children to apply learned skills while developing new ones, ranging from large to fine motor skills to forms of locomotion, from social skills of assertiveness to cooperation and negotiation.

▲ providing opportunities for children to apply current knowledge while acquiring new ideas?

▲ organizing hands-on experiences with a wide variety of sensory materials?

▲ learning information from community resources, via field trips, libraries, and special classroom visitors?

▲ learning individually or cooperatively in small as well as large groups?

▲ learning through noisy, active pursuits as well as quiet, sedentary ones?

▲ children applying and illustrating skills and knowledge through various processes of representation and symbolic thought? Processes may include art, modeling and sketching, creative movement, music, puppetry, storytelling, cooking, dramatic play, woodworking, story writing, story illustrating, graphing, surveying, water and sand play, block building, etc.)

▲ learning through an integrated approach via various curriculum activities? For instance, to learn about apples or orchards, do children gain basic knowledge and skills through language arts (listening, speaking, reading, writing), cooking, field trips, art, dramatic play, interviewing special visitors, reading books, and talking with parents?

▲ regular, frequent, and ongoing parent contribution, participation, and communication?

Dr. Lilian Katz in her many speeches, reminds us to choose topics of study which provide children "knowledge worth knowing." Knowledge worth knowing will improve children's enjoyment and respect for life and learning. It will build and support a sense of self as well as respect for others and their ideas. It will stimulate a thirst for greater knowledge. All that is what makes a topic worth investigating. May the investigations through activities and projects be joyful and meaningful as well as thought-provoking and mind-expanding!

IN THE BOOK CORNER

SPRINKLE YOUR CLASS WITH BOOKS

by Sandra Malcolm

Books should be a primary feature in all areas of your classroom. As you organize your room for the upcoming school year or look for new arrangements to spark student interest in your year-round centers, think *children's literature*. Ask yourself, *"How can I help children see a connection between books and everyday living?"* Let the answer to this question drive your decision to include book baskets, story boxes, and prop boxes in every learning center you establish.

Every classroom should have a quiet reading or library center where children know they can curl up and be wrapped in the comfort of a favorite book. Beanbag chairs, fluffy carpet squares or overstuffed pillows make excellent plop-and-drop spaces.

Now it's time to encourage the same enthusiasm for books to spill into other corners of your room. A well placed book basket, an intriguing prop box or a curiosity-building story box will encourage children to incorporate literature into all areas of their play day. Each one can be used anywhere in the room and should be changed frequently to sustain interest.

A **book basket** is a container (basket, box, tub, or bag) holding several books relating to a particular theme or that share a common interest. Examples will follow as the various centers are described. Be cautious of overloading a book basket initially. Be selective and change the books regularly. Introduce the books to children until they become comfortable with finding books in the book basket.

A **story box** differs from a book basket in that it has several books and a variety of materials that stimulate interaction with the books. The materials can include but are not limited to art materials, writing materials, flannelboard pieces, toys, or other manipulatives.

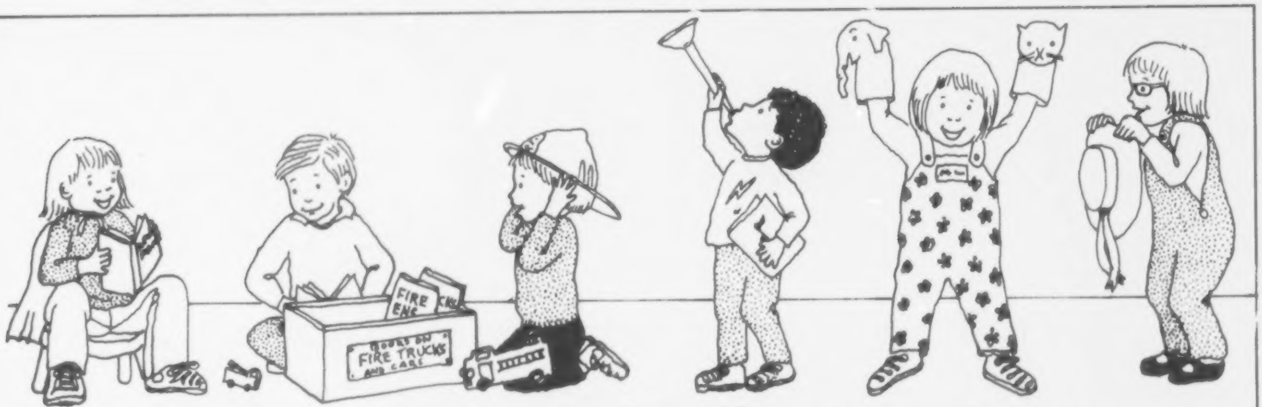
THE THREE BILLY GOATS

The **prop box** contains items that facilitate retelling or re-creating stories that have been shared. Encourage children to create new tales using familiar props as well as reenact the old. Language is developing as children stretch their imaginations by copying familiar author or storytelling styles.

We are now ready to organize a language rich classroom. Following are children's literature ideas to enhance learning centers. Be creative and change centers when children begin to lose interest. Do not allow a center to become stale. Make simple changes: add a new item, take something away, rearrange what is available, or encourage new uses for familiar items.

DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER

Children love to be on stage. Have available a puppet theater, a flannelboard, and a stage area to encourage children to act out story ideas (not all have to be, nor should they be available at one time). Keep the interest


FIRE ENG
BOOKS ON FIRE TRUCKS AND CARS

high by changing the delivery methods and props. Prop boxes containing puppet, select dress up clothes (for example, a red cape) or flannelboard characters to familiar stories will help stimulate the imagination. Do not give a specific instruction for the use of the items found in the prop box, but rather allow spontaneous play to result. Props that were used to tell a story during circle time could show up in the prop box a day or two later. For example, read *Martin's Hats* by Joan W. Blos (William Morrow), then provide a box of hats for children to interact with during play time or center time.

MUSIC CENTER

Include books in the music center that correspond to songs enjoyed in the classroom. A tape of the song, along with the book can be included in a story box. For example Raffi's *Shake My Sillies Out* (Crown Publishers) or *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin and John Archambault (Simon and Shuster) would be fun for children to interact with on their own or with a friend without interference from an adult.

Another method of including books in the music center is to select books with sounds in them, such as *Barnyard Banter* by Denise Fleming (Henry Holt) and providing instruments for children to experiment with as they retell the story. Help them begin thinking by asking such questions as *"How can we make the sound much, much, muck?"* A similar story is *Splash Splash* by Jeff Sheppard (Macmillan). A tape of the story could be available for children to listen to. Then let children try to think of ways to make the sounds of each animal using whatever items they can find.

ART CENTER

A story box could be placed in the art center with books such as *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), *Little Blue and Little Yellow*, by Leo Lionni (Scholastic), or another book by Leo Lionni, *A Color of His Own* (Alfred Knopf). Along with these books could be a variety of ways for children to experiment with the mixing of colors. Tissue paper and glue for collage making, colored acetate sheets that can be stacked and restacked to make new colors, or zip-locking plastic bags with shortening and food coloring drops to squeeze new colors all make interesting ways for children to connect literature to discovery learning.

At another time, collect rainbow books and a variety of ways for children to experiment with creating rainbows of their own. The story box serves as a springboard to discovery in the world around children. They will learn more by doing than by being shown by an adult.

WRITING CENTER

There is a natural and logical relationship between reading and writing. To be writers, children need to be readers and to be readers, they need to be writers. This does not mean they need to be fluent readers or writers but rather emergent readers and writers as they struggle to make sense of print. Therefore, books as well as bookmaking materials should be an integral part of the writing center. Word books, alphabet books, books with repetition, old favorites—all need to be available to the writer. Manipulating print helps children develop as writers.

These centers are intended to be suggestions, as are the books in the book baskets, story boxes and the prop boxes. Only you know what is best for your students. When you organize your classroom, think print—a splash here; a dash there.

STILL IN THE

BOOK CORNER

MORE BOOK-FILLED CENTERS

by Karel Kilimnik

As you organize your classroom, set aside a space in each area or center for books. It can be a milk crate full of books or just a few books lying on a table. By making books so accessible to young children, we help them learn that books open doors and have lots of interesting stuff in them. You can never teach these basic research skills too early.

Share the books with children before leaving them out. This is also a way to interest children in exploring a different area. Go over rules for handling books before putting them in the centers.

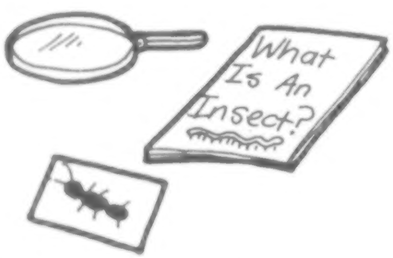
For more book suggestions to share with children, ask your children's librarian. Librarians are the most helpful people. I have included additional authors you might want to check out for your different centers/areas.

SCIENCE CENTER

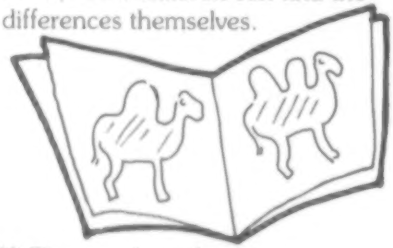
A science center can be set up like a mini-please-touch museum around whatever theme you are exploring. *Ranger Rick Magazine* (National Wildlife Federation) is an excellent resource to collect and display.

A wonderful series is The Stopwatch books. These photographic essays with simple text come in Big Books, too. Topics include chicken and egg; spider's web; bean and plant; snail; tadpole and frog; butterfly and caterpillar; hamster, and mushroom.

For your insect research, try *What Is an Insect?* by Robert Snedden (Sierra Club Books for Children.) I found myself drawn to the photographs (some fascinating such as the caterpillar stretched across the page clearly using all its legs to hold on to a twig and some gross like the squiggly mass of maggots just hatched).


What Is An Insect?

North-South Books had published an interesting book, mostly about mammals. *Do You Know the Difference—Wild Animals?* by Andrea and Michael Bischoff-Miersch. This intriguing book compares two animals most people consider to be similar. For example, the Dromedary or Arabian Camel with the Bactrian Camel. Dromedaries have one hump, camels two, and the list goes on. They also compare the Indian Elephant and the African Elephant. Before reading this book, see if children can find the differences themselves.



Plant study in the science center can take place all year round. Let's start with that Halloween favorite—the pumpkin. *The Pumpkin Patch* by Elizabeth King (Puffin Unicorn) is another photographic essay of the life history of a pumpkin. Great to use both before and after trips to the pumpkin patch. The photos are so clear you can almost feel the texture of each pumpkin as you turn the pages.

Other authors and/or series you might want to check out include: Eric Carle (*The Grouchy Ladybug*); Joanne Ryder (*Where Butterflies Grow*); the Eyewitness Series (Alfred A. Knopf, topics include Bird, Fish, Mammal, Plant).

MATH CENTER

On to the math center. Counting books abound on practically any topic. Once again just check your library or bookstore for titles. One author who writes "math" is Anno (*Anno's Counting Book*).

A Caribbean Counting Book by Faustin Charles (Houghton Mifflin) is a colorful collection of counting rhymes flowing with rhythm.

One way to make these rhymes more accessible to children is to copy one on chart paper. Add the numerals and pictures over the words to help children remember the original rhymes as they work on making their own pictures or representations with manipulatives. These rhymes are so contagious that reading them several times will probably embed them in children's memories. Don't forget to pull out the world map and point out the Caribbean islands!

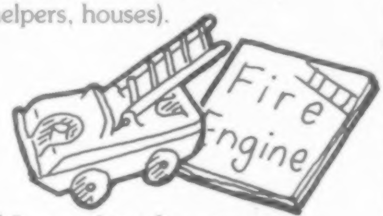
Another counting book, this time using animals, is *1, 2, 3 What Do You See?* by Susi Bohdal (North-South Publishers). A little girl romps through this book with numerals and different animals.

The next book is a little more sophisticated for those ready to move on to putting groups of objects together. *Ten Flashing Fireflies* by Philemon Sturges (North-South Publishers). Two children out in the evening are catching fireflies. There are ten fireflies and as the story progresses some are caught and put in the jar. The numbers change as the evening continues until all ten fireflies are in the jar.

Make a jar and set of ten fireflies. Have children model the story and tell how many are in the jar and how many are out of the jar.

BLOCK AREA

Building areas (blocks, Legos, Tinkertoys) can be accessorized to complement different topics (transportation, community helpers, houses).



Learn about fire prevention. Visit your local fire station. Gather up fire trucks and share these books. *Fire Trucks* by Hope Irvin Marston (Cobblehill Books) presents an overview of all kinds of fire fighting vehicles including boats and airplanes. At the very end, there are photographs showing children what to do if there is a fire in their house.

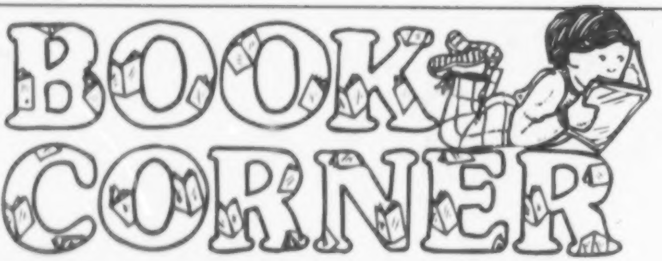
Anne Rockwell's book *Fire Engines* (Puffin Unicorn) presents some of the same information but using drawings and with less words and details.

For a transportation study, turn your building area into a train station. Fill it with all kinds of train cars (engines, passenger cars, freight cars, cabooses, tanker cars, livestock cars). Share *Trains* by Anne Rockwell (Dutton Children's Books) with the group. Rockwell has filled the book with foxes (as passengers, engineers, conductors) on all kinds of trains including passenger, monorail, subway and elevated trains. Take the class on different kinds of trains and then let them loose in the building area!

Turn the building area into a house building study center. Walk around your neighborhood to look at both construction sites and different kinds of houses. *How a House Is Built* by Gail Gibbons (Scholastic) provides an interesting look at the different stages of construction of a house. At the end of the book Gibbons provides a look at "Simple Shelters of the Past" such as a cave, bamboo shelter, and a tent.

How a House Is Built

STILL IN THE



CREATE A BOOK NOOK

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

A book nook is a special area where children are surrounded by books and can enjoy them quietly and comfortably. You can create a book nook in your classroom with minimal time and effort.

CHOOSING A SPACE

You don't need a large space, just an area that isn't highly trafficked. Define the space in some way, perhaps with shelving or a modest room divider. Just be sure you can see children. One of the best arrangements I've worked with had low shelves built into a wall beneath a row of windows. There was a small space in front of which was medium height shelving. This area was private, yet allowed adults to see children.

FILLING THE SPACE

Make the area comfortable. Add a rug if the space doesn't have one. Provide several cushions, pillows, beanbags, or a combination. You might like to include a child-sized sofa and/or some child-sized chairs.

Decorate your space with posters of children's books. You can buy them from catalogues or pick them up at conferences. *Free Stuff for Kids*, 1996 edition, edited by David Tobey (Meadowbrook Press) provides a source for a free picture book posters. Publishers of children's books often honor requests for publicity material on books and authors. If you can splurge, buy a stuffed animal or character that ties in with a children's book. Characters include Spot, Clifford, Arthur and D.W., Corduroy, and Angelina.

STORING THE BOOKS

I like to store picture books in plastic boxes and milk cartons. You also can use sturdy cardboard boxes that you or the children have decorated. Put the bins on low shelves it you have them. The bins can be pulled out easily. Or you can place the boxes or cartons on the floor.

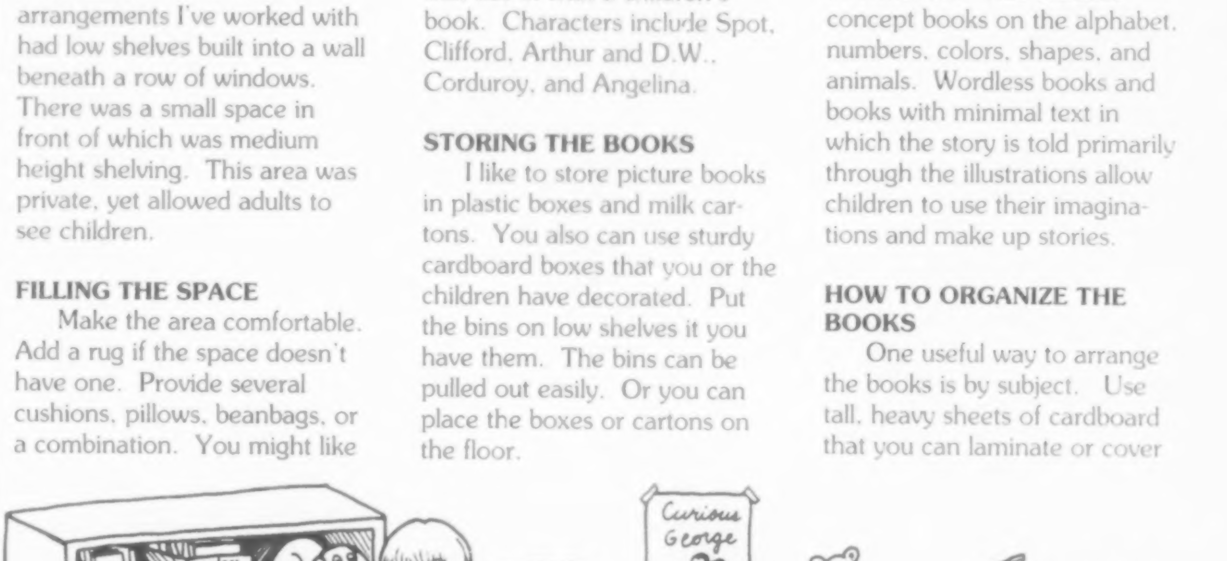
In boxes and cartons, books are facing forward so children can easily flip through them and see each book cover. If the books are placed within bookends, children can hardly see the books' spines unless they pull them out and then the books can fall over easily.

TYPES OF BOOKS TO COLLECT

Select books on subjects that will appeal to young children and help convey important information. This includes concept books on the alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes, and animals. Wordless books and books with minimal text in which the story is told primarily through the illustrations allow children to use their imaginations and make up stories.

HOW TO ORGANIZE THE BOOKS

One useful way to arrange the books is by subject. Use tall, heavy sheets of cardboard that you can laminate or cover



with wallpaper for durability. At the top of each sheet, write the name of the subject and draw a matching picture, paste a photograph or place a sticker next to the words so children will know exactly what the books in that section are about. For example if your subject is colors, you can draw a rainbow next to the word *colors*, place stickers of colorful balloons on the tab, or glue a photograph of crayons on the divider.

PREPARING THE BOOKS

Hardcover books are preferable because they are more durable, but they are very expensive. If you purchase books, give them longer life by reinforcing their corners and spines with heavy tape.

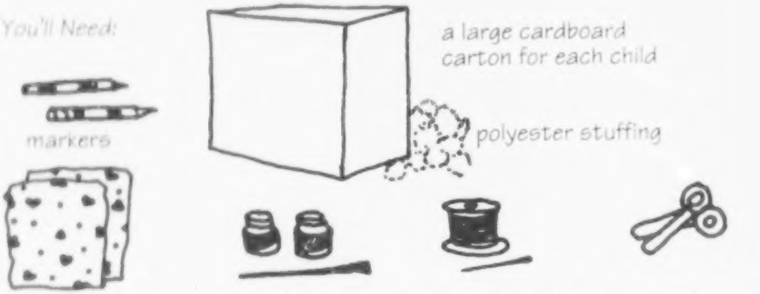
ACQUIRING BOOKS AND FURNISHINGS

Usually budgets are limited. To add to your book collection, provide parents with a wish list; then accept donations. Rotate collections from class to class if there are multiple rooms. Implement a program that encourages parents, caregivers, and community members to donate books or money for books. Money for books can come in memory of someone or in celebration of a child's birthday.

QUIET CORNERS

by Kathy Faggella

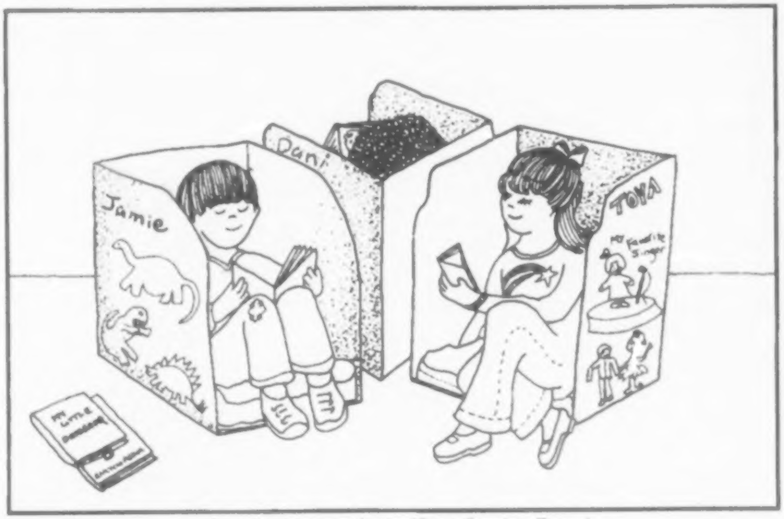
You'll Need:



- a large cardboard carton for each child
- markers
- polyester stuffing
- pieces of fabric
- paint brush
- needle and thread
- scissors

What to Do:

1. Adult cuts top and one side out of a large corrugated box.
2. Child and adult make a cushion from two pieces of fabric to fit inside box bottom.
3. Children use markers or paints to design sides of box with their names and "favorite" things.



from *Building on Books* (First Teacher Press)

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TODDLER TIME

POCKET MAGIC

by Jeannine Perez

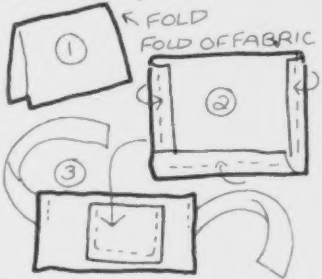
Children are fascinated by pockets and pocket toys. Look around your classroom. Most of the equipment and materials for small children are designed for their ease in handling and in the development of a child's fine and gross motor skills. However, in watching toddlers play, we soon realize that children also love small toys and any surprise that can be hidden and carried in pockets.

You can start by revamping several old shirts. Simply roll up the sleeves and use the shirts as smocks. To make these smocks handier, sew patch pockets on each shirt. Deep pockets hold and store brushes and rags. The smaller ones are handy for notes to yourself. When art time is over, the smocks (with their permanently stocked pockets) area ready to hang on a hook until the next art activity. They provide protection and they also save preparation time.

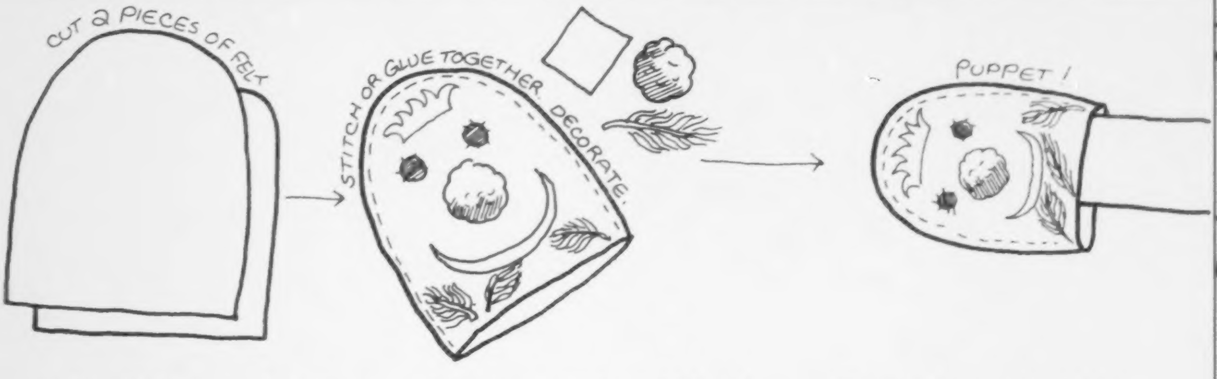
You can then make some new tunic tops. You can make a cobbler apron type pocket stitched across the bottom of the front (about six inches deep), and divide the wide pocket into different widths, from narrow pencil and pen widths, to card and book sized widths.

TIPS IN MAKING AND USING POCKETS

- Make pockets of sturdy material. Double them, cutting a rectangle and then folding it in half. Use the fold for the top of the pocket. Turn under the raw edges on the other three sides and press neatly, then pin and sew the pockets in place. If you have no machine, they can be stitched on by hand.



- Planning is good. Decide what you are going to put in pockets before cutting, placing, and attaching them. Be sure to make at least one pocket big enough for 3" X 5" index cards (larger cards are harder to store and handle. This large pocket becomes a "portable file cabinet." If possible, laminate or cover often-used cards with clear plastic for permanence.
- Make pockets of different sizes and colors and sew them on in a balanced (but non-symmetrical) design. This way you will save yourself the headaches of trying to match one side to the other.
- Use different colored index cards for different topics. For example, pink cards are filled with fingerplays and song titles; white cards are for anecdotal notes that you do not want to forget, curriculum ideas, things you need to buy or bring from home, and any "must dos." Green cards are "what if" or open-ended questions that you can throw out for little ones to ponder if there is still a few minutes of time that needs filling. *"What would happen if we all turned blue tomorrow?"*
- Store the whole collection of idea cards (more and more each year) on a shelf in several recipe boxes, and try to take a minute each morning to grab several from the boxes to store in your pockets for the day.
- Emptying is important also! Don't forget to empty your pockets each night and to refile the cards you've just used, or you will soon find yourself weighted down with sagging, heavy pockets. It will also become impossible to quickly find anything stored in your crowded pockets.
- What else do to keep in your pockets? Markers, pens, Bandaids, tissues, and perhaps a



post-it pad. Your pockets may hold anything you think will be important that day. Small dolls and toys are nice surprises.

Puppets are always popular with toddlers. They are also wonderful communication aids. On hectic days, puppets capture a toddler's attention and immediate interest.

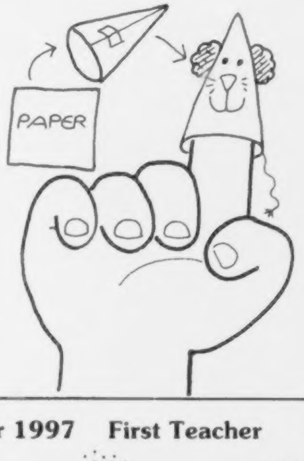
Puppets tell stories, teach songs, and ease transition times. Some very small puppets called "Finger Friends" hide in pockets. To make them, draw a simple pattern, about 2 1/2" long and 1 1/2" wide that is roughly a horseshoe shape. Use two pieces of felt for each puppet. Stitch or glue the shapes together, leaving an opening at the bottom straight edge for your finger. (The two pieces don't even need to be the same color.) Glue or stitch on yarn or fabric scraps to make the puppet's face and clothing. You can then add jewelry, feathers, or buttons for decorations if puppets are meant only for your use, and children are the spectators. However, try not to add tiny items for any puppets that small children play with, and do not attach anything that could be picked off and swallowed. Use acrylic paints or permanent markers to decorate the puppets and to add facial features and other details.

- Keep cardboard color samples from paint stores in your pockets. Use them in art projects, to identify colors and sing color songs, and to compare with nature's colors when you go on walks. In the fall, use autumn and Halloween colors. Make it a game by passing out color cards, then saying, *"Will everyone with orange cards please stand up?" "Will all brown cards lay down and roll over, please?"*
- You might also carry footprints in your pocket! They are cut from paper scraps, and you can use them to make a path leading to a surprise or special activities. Cut them from different colors of paper in different sizes. Laminating them makes them reusable, and they can also be taped to meander up a wall or around a door.

Fingerplays coordinate well with activities. Cut out quarter circles of gray paper and some six inch lengths of fat yarn and store them in a pocket. In another pocket, put a card with this fingerplay:

Five little mice on the pantry floor;
This little mouse peeked behind the door.
This little mouse nibbled at the cake.
This little mouse not a sound did make.
This little mouse took a bit of cheese.
This little mouse heard the kitten sneeze.
Ah-choo! sneezed the kitten and "Squeak" they cried.
As they found a hole and ran inside.

Make finger mice to act out this fingerplay by forming cornucopias of the paper, fastening them with glue, and attaching yarn to the wide open end. The pointy end is the little mouse's head, and children can add eyes and a nose with a watercolor marker or by gluing on pom-poms. Demonstrate the fingerplay with a mouse on each finger of one hand, and then encourage each toddler to try on a little mouse and decide what he will make it do.



EXPECTED THE UNEXPECTED

by Ellen Javernick

When my husband, a football coach, feared a rout, I heard him use the expression, *"Punt and pray for rain."* While the prayers certainly didn't hurt, I was glad he had a kicker prepared to punt.

When we work with little people, we also often need to be prepared to punt. Children throw up, projects prove more complicated that we'd anticipated, new students arrive on mornings we have no extra snacks, parents arrive late to pick up their children. If we expect the unexpected, we can often save the day.

A Mixed Bag When the paint spills, or the tape recorder jams, we need to occupy our children while we solve the problem. Be prepared with bags or oatmeal boxes, if you have space to store them, filled with small toys collected from bottoms of toy boxes and garage sale grab bags. Add cereal surprises, gifts from kiddy meals and church nursery rejects. Shake well. The treasure boxes will entertain your children while you're getting things back under control. Not only will the children enjoy playing with the toys, they'll like counting, and sorting and dropping them into their boxes. If the emergency takes quite a while, have the children exchange boxes. Be sure that all toys are of a safe size for your students. Remember the smaller the child, the bigger the toy.

On a Happier Note Songs are fine fillers when activities take less time than we'd planned them to take. But where are those songs when we need them? There seems to be a reverse correlation between the number of songs we can remember and the time we need to fill with singing. Be prepared by making a song collection. Write or glue a copy of each of your children's favorite songs on a 5" by 9" index card. Poke a hole in the corner of each card and fasten the cards together with a metal ring. Be sure to include long songs like "The Bear Went Over the Mountain." You and your children can think of additional verses if you need to fill more time.

Handy Helpers Discipline always seems to deteriorate when the unexpected happens. When Suzie screams because she's scared of the thunder, other children can be counted on to add their voices to the confusion. Puppets soon settle everybody back down to normal. Fuzzy Bear (or whoever) can appear to give the frightened child a hug. He can put a paw to his lips to ask for quiet. Children respond readily when puppets appeal to them for cooperation when routines have to be changed unexpectedly.

Into the Mouths of Babes Food never fails us. It has the power entertain as well as to soothe. Keep a box of breakfast cereal, or tiny crackers on hand in the cupboard. Remember the smaller the snack the longer it takes the toddlers to eat it....and if you say Grace, you can make snack time last long enough so Sammy forgets that Mom's a little late picking him up.

All Aboard To Organization Pre-schoolers don't organize particularly easily. You can't just say, "Let's all line up now," but there are times when it's essential to move the group quickly. When a child throws up, you have to intervene before sympathy stomach aches become epidemic. While another staff member cares for an injured child, you may have the responsibility for controlling the remainder of the children. If the fire alarm goes off, you may need to lead the evacuation. Turn yourself into the engine of the train, the drum majorette of the band, the guide for bear hunt, and lead children out of harm's way. If necessary, you can even pick up a toddler or two as you leave the area. Elementary school style fire drills aren't the answer for pre-schoolers, but you can practice being a train or marching in a parade.

Better Late Than Never Staff emergencies do happen. If a snow storm delays a staff member's arrival, you need to have a backup plan. To insure adequate supervision, you might have to move your toddlers in with your pre-kindergartners. Be sure to evaluate the activities planned for the older children to be sure that they're appropriate for your little ones. You may want to make different puzzle selections, or plan a different art activity. In some situations it may work best to bring all the children together for a story. It's hard to pick a good story when the pressure's on.

Empowered Do you know where your flashlight is? Most state childcare laws require that you have one handy, but darkness will prevail if you can't locate it quickly when the power goes out. The perfect preschool emergency flashlight is the lantern type sold at camping stores. Since you don't have to hold it, you'll have two hands free to cuddle frightened children. In the center of the circle it becomes a wonderful imaginary campfire around which you can sit and sing songs.

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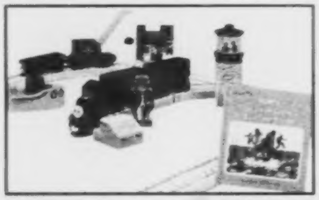

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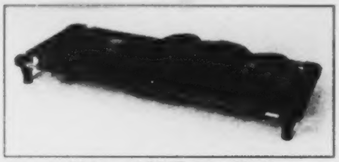

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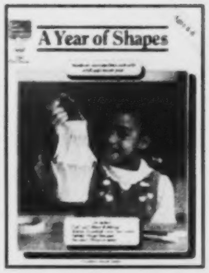

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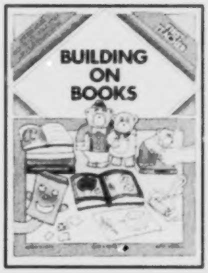

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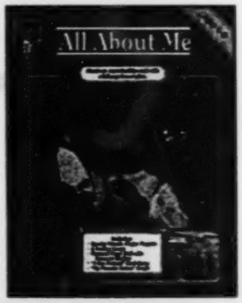

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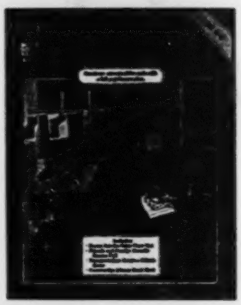

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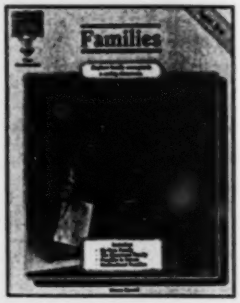

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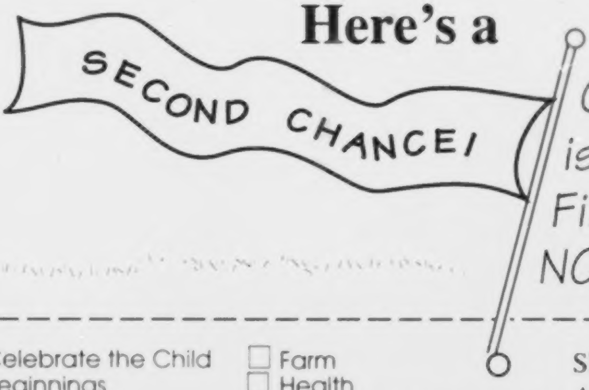
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Durkin

Many of us will be celebrating holidays and special occasions in the next two months. In so many places around the world, people are celebrating the harvest, the coming of winter, and the joy of being with family and friends. In this issue, we celebrate the season with an emphasis on this last theme. We feel that the theme of family and friends transcends religious and national holidays, while embodying the spirit of togetherness and celebration.

Families come in all sizes and shapes. If children don't have a family or if there is so much conflict in the family that they are not getting the support and love they need, you can make them feel at home in the "classroom family." Sherry Burrell shows how family and friends merge in this very special relationship.

Friendship is still a developing concept for young children. There are ideas in this issue for art projects, songs, cooperative games and movement activities, and even a new computer program for pre-schoolers. Karen Stephens shares some interesting ideas for language development that involve both friendly interactions and family members.

Even as teachers and classmates become an extended family to a young child, it is equally important that the child's home family feel welcome and comfortable at school. In their articles, Margery Kranyik and Barbara Backer show you how to be a "reachable teacher," a person who is accessible to and positive with families, everyday and especially at parent/teacher conferences. There are ideas for bringing family members into your classroom to share a wealth of information and life experiences. One of my favorite ideas is "Monday Munchies" where each week another family is responsible for making a snack together to share with the class on Monday.

Our centerfold combines family, friends, and the celebration of Thanksgiving. Stories and activities associated with this traditional holiday help children learn about friendship—between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans—and family values as exhibited by the Pilgrims who experienced extreme hardships together and then celebrated together when they harvested their first crops in the New World.

Why not invite your families into the classroom for a special occasion this winter? Celebrate the joy of being together—learning, working, and playing with each other.

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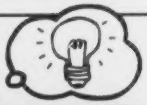
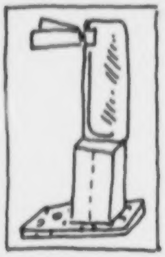


HELPFUL HINTS

TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Gail P. Jones



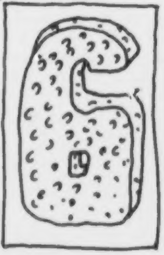
As we look forward to the holidays, we also think about what new things we can do and give. Why not start early in November, asking children and families to donate "good" trash with ideas for gifts to make? And, remember, not all children have to make the same things!

Brainstorm ways to recycle, reduce, and reuse now as well as during Earth Week! Let children each donate an old storybook before creating new stories using an assortment of pictures from various books. To save time, let children dictate the words on blank tapes.

Look for group projects that will involve friends and families such as food collections, mitten trees, and tea parties for the elderly.

Use your bulletin boards for recognizing "random acts of kindness" or "things for which we're thankful" that can be created by all staff, children, and parents throughout the holidays.

Put together "Our Favorite Foods" recipe books with each parent donating the recipe for their child's favorite food. Not only will everyone get great ideas, but it can also be used as a fund-raiser for buying needed school supplies or items for charity.

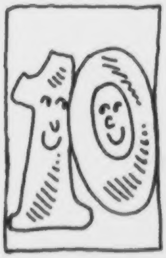


Be creative with food preparation. How about a marshmallow *Rice Krispie* treat shaped like a turkey, menorah, or holiday tree to be decorated by children for a holiday party?

Try to reduce stress with massages in your fitness center, or with classical music in your music center.

A great way to involve everyone in Thanksgiving is to have an all-school feast with each class supplying one or two items for all. Parents may wish to serve the little Pilgrims and Native Americans who attend the feast!

Instead of the traditional holiday programs, why not have a week-long celebration for the coming of winter with parent nights, indoor and outdoor activities as well as art, music, and games?



And, above all, make the season merry by planning less instead of more! Let children think of ways they can help to do the same at home!

OUR CLASSROOM AS A FAMILY

by Sherry Burrell

"MY class... MY teacher... MY toys... MY friends..." These are words that remind us that young children view the world in terms of how it BELONGS TO them. Because children are highly egocentric, the world feels to them as if everything revolves around them, and they are firmly planted at the center of their universe. "Growing up" is the very slowly evolving, rather painful, process of finding out that this is just not true. Along the way, children who develop a healthy self-image in spite of this eye-opener, are the children who have been made to feel as if they do indeed BELONG in many important ways and in many important places in their world.

When you are successful at enabling children to feel as if they BELONG to a classroom family, a solid foundation is formed. Every child needs a family—as a source of love, nurturing, and acceptance. But not every child has the experience of a loving family unit, and even those who do, can benefit from knowing that a "family can be lots of different things."

When children are exploring a subject as sensitive as "families," it is important that they feel safe, secure, and supported. We want children to feel that they have a caring support group right in the classroom, no matter what the situation at home. By introducing the concept of the classroom family before discussing the child's own family, we offer a way to support and enrich the child's feelings of security.

FIRST STEPS

First, we, teachers, need to see ourselves as classroom family members. We need to work, play, and learn together with the children. When we focus ourselves on building the spirit of togetherness, we create a more "family-style" classroom.

In a "family-style" classroom, all aspects of the environment—room arrangement, physical atmosphere, curriculum planning, and adult roles—are designed to promote the child's sense of belonging. If you see yourself as a "facilitator of togetherness," you will stop trying to control individuals and focus instead on promoting cooperation and respect.

FAMILIES WORK TOGETHER

The classroom is a family in which each child makes a contribution. In a family, all ideas and feelings should have a place to be expressed and heard. Consider having regular "class family meetings." Here children have the chance to plan projects, distribute class jobs, agree on class rules, express positive feelings toward one another, and settle conflicts affecting the group. During "class family meetings," keep notes on large chart paper, using one- or two- word phrases or even drawings to depict what has been decided. Use a simple "Class Meeting Minutes" format that includes: "Today, we discussed...," We decided...," and "Next time we will talk about..."

Class Meeting Minutes

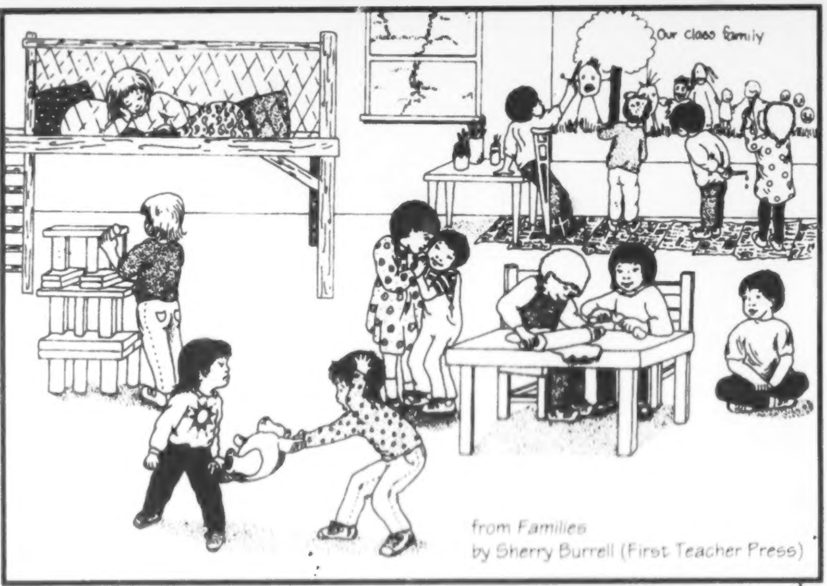
Date: ____________

Today we discussed

We decided

Next time we will talk about

In my book, *Families*, (First Teacher Press), there is a super drawing (of a classroom family



from Families
by Sherry Burrell (First Teacher Press)

that can be used to stimulate discussion of the kinds of challenges that classroom families face. In the drawing, two children appear to be fighting over a teddy bear, a single child is reading a book, two children are whispering to one another, some children are painting a mural together, and more. When children really look at this picture, they see that there are many different kinds of people to respect, and many different situations to learn how to handle when you belong to a classroom family.

FAMILIES PLAY TOGETHER

Family members help each other and do things together. The themes of interdependence, cooperation, acceptance, sharing, and belonging are all basic to the concept of the family unit. Replacing traditional competitive games (in which children are left out or rejected) with more cooperative games enables children to experience the "family" concept.

One game that might fall into this category is "Blanketball." Divide children into groups of four or five and provide each group with a blanket so that it can support a beach ball on top. Provide one ball for every two groups. The object is to use the blanket to toss the ball to the other group. That group tries to catch the ball on top of its blanket. Each group works together to pass the ball back and forth to see how long they can keep the ball from touching the floor as a huge team. This game becomes even more fun and exciting when it is played outside with water balloons! Remember that you are part of the classroom family and should play along with the children!

FAMILIES LEARN TOGETHER

Each family member learns and grows. Families change over time: birth and death are natural parts of the process of change. When teachers, children, and parents all come together for a learning experience, wonderful things can happen. Consider inviting parents to join their children in a "celebration of the family." At this event, a child and parent "pair" might bring in family photos and create a book together about their own family. They might create a time-line collage showing how the life cycle works. Parents and children could cut out or draw pictures to represent infancy all the way through "old age" on one long strip of mural paper. When you join in with children and parents as they learn together, you extend the concept of "family" by reminding parents that we are all always learning.

Finally, encourage children and parents to study nature together. Whatever "family" group in nature is studied—animal, vegetable or mineral—children will soon discover that each individual member is unique. Members of one group may differ in color, behavior, environment, body size, and more. By studying groups in nature, children will learn about themselves. They might use magnifying glasses to make observations about a classroom "ant farm," and use their observations to talk about how people and ants are alike in many ways. A tree with its roots, a trunk, branches, and leaves is a living, growing, changing system. The classroom family is also a system—a giant "family tree"—with children, teachers, and the children's own families all functioning together to enjoy the child's school experience.

TODDLER TIME

FAMILY FUN IN THE CLASSROOM

by Jeannine Perez

Parents and grandparents are a teacher's greatest resource. You can ask families to go on field trips, save scrap materials for art projects, and to share favorite family recipes for cookbooks. However, there is a difference between encouraging supportive parents and forging partnerships between home and school. While parents enjoy helping with parties and field trips, it is wise to ask them for goals and curriculum ideas as well as for cookies.

There are many ways to strengthen the bridge between home and school. The following ideas may help you plan your own family fun activities.

- Be approachable, and show a personal interest in your families—their opinions and needs. Listen to their observations about their children, and their long term goals for their children. Greet parents by their names. Do so in their own language, if possible.
- Talk about your upcoming themes and curriculum with parents, and ask their opinions often. Try to keep families informed and involved with bulletin boards or newsletters, and welcome their input also. With encouragement, parents can help create parent boards such as a three-dimensional pyramid nutrition bulletin board or an interactive display on simple machines with moving parts. Often these displays are more complicated than you would have had time or energy to create. Parents also help with newsletter articles and give many ideas for units and themes. When families feel they have a voice, they become involved.
- As teachers, we have access to current research, lists of organizations, and publications on parenting. Offer to be a resource person for your families. Ask them what they would like to learn more about; topics might include toilet training, nutrition, or positive discipline. You can plan workshops, post research material, or form parent groups to talk and problem solve each other's parenting dilemmas.
- A picture is worth many words. Keep a scrapbook of photos and a display of children's work available at the checkout table. Include illustrated dictated stories and experience charts in your displays and in newsletters. Everyone likes to see their own children in action. Plan a video night, and surprise parents with cookies, fruit juice, and a recorded tape that you title " A Day at the Center."
- Make home visits or offer get togethers or meetings at convenient locations for parents who work. Being as flexible as possible helps parents see you as accessible and sincerely interested.
- Social times that offer food and laughter make it easier to connect on a casual level. Schedule the expected activities like open houses, parent conferences, and parenting workshops; then be creative and impromptu with celebrations and festivals. Some of the best get togethers have used popular themes that you have extended for your parents. You might have indoor picnics on the floor in midwinter, multicultural potlucks, a night comet watch, and even a sleepover and pancake breakfast. You might invite families to special movie times and to listen to storytellers and children's authors.

"Dinosaur Doings" was one of our most successful parties, and we planned it so that

ents and grandparents could "catch" the children's excitement about the prehistoric world. The children had decorated the center with their artwork including a bulletin board heavy with green fernlike leaves, volcanos with red cellophane fire, and huge dinosaurs. We set out all of our favorite dinosaur books and lots of pillows so children and their parents could share our book nook.

Our refreshments were fixed by children: Dinosaur Bread and Swamp Punch. (We even printed up the recipes for the parents.)

SNACKS

Dinosaur Bread Use frozen bread dough that has been thawed. Give each child a ball of dough, and let them make many small balls from their portion. Grease a cookie sheet (or spray with vegetable spray). Make an outline of the dinosaur with your finger on the cookie sheet. Help children fill in the outline of the dinosaur with their many small dough balls. Round up the body with several layers. Your dinosaur should be bumpy. Poke a raisin in for an eye. Let your dinosaur rise until double and paint it with a glaze of egg yolk mixed with a teaspoon of water. You can add green food coloring to the mixture if you want a colored dinosaur. When doubled, bake in a 350° F oven 40-45 minutes, or until done.

Swamp Juice Simmer apple juice with a few cloves and a cinnamon stick. Strain and cool to lukewarm; then serve.

FOOTOSAURUS

We allowed plenty of time for looking around, eating, and for reading books and playing games together, and then led the parents and children to the table set with materials for an art project. Wanting a project easy and fun for all ages, we decided to make families of Footosauruses. We directed the children and their parents to trace around each other's feet and then use crayons to turn footprints into dinosaurs. We cut them out and displayed our Footosaurus families on an empty wall.

SILLY SONGS

We ended the evening (early) with a silly song the children and I had composed, and we challenged the adults to think of even sillier songs that we could learn and sing together.

"Stegosaurus"
My name is Stegosaurs
I have smelly, yucky feet!
I don't eat other dinosaurs
'cause plants are all I eat!

The party was fun and easily done, and the toddlers were very proud to show their parents around our school.

Another successful evening was spent at a Santa Workshop. I brought my sewing machine, socks, and fabric scraps; parents brought potluck dishes, hammers, paint, and wood scraps; and children brought lots of ideas. We ate, then worked together making toys for the center and for charity. Parents took turns organizing games for the children, and we also involved them in making puppets, stuffing toys, and critiquing our final results. We discovered the gestalt of group cooperation. Together we came up with wonderful ideas and more toys than we could have done if we'd worked individually. It was a magical evening.

Schools and parents need to work as members of an important team. Each complements the other working for the important common goal—happy, healthy, young children!

"F" STANDS FOR FRIENDS

by Tania K. Cowling

A friend is a person we enjoy being with. Ralph Waldo Emerson, said, *"The only way to have a friend is to be one."* But, teaching HOW to be a friend is much more difficult than it seems. Devote a few minutes daily to discussing the concepts and feelings of friendship. Incorporate these goals into your curriculum and use the following activity ideas to enhance this friendship theme.

- A friend is a good listener.
- A friend makes you smile.
- A friend is helpful.
- A friend shares.
- A friend is someone who cares.
- A friend can be a boy or a girl.
- A friend likes you just the way you are.
- A friend is proud of you.

ACTIVITIES FOR FRIENDS

Pen Pals Set up "pen pals" between two different classrooms. Write your children's names on slips of paper and place them into a container. Exchange containers between classrooms and have each child draw a name. Depending on age and grade level, decide whether children are to write letters or draw individual pictures to send to their pen pal friends.

Fingerprints Provide an ink pad and white paper at a table. Let children make fingerprints. Using a magnifying glass, look at several people's fingerprints. Talk about the fact that we may all look similar on the outside, however, our fingerprints are totally unique from one another.

Picture Math Using a camera (an instant-developing camera, if possible), take pictures of groups of children. Maybe two in one photo, three the next, four, and so on. Place these pictures on a bulletin board or poster. Make separate corresponding number cards. Have children match the correct number to the amount of friends in the picture.

Friendship Bulletin Board Ask children to bring in photos of their friends from home to school. Put each child's name on the board and affix their photos directly below. Remind children that family members and pets can be friends too!

Mirror Game Children can imitate each other playing the "mirror game." First make several mirrors to use in the game. Cut out medium-sized squares of cardboard. Cover these squares with aluminum foil. Punch a hole on each corner at the top and thread yarn through tying the ends together to make a necklace. Divide the class in groups of two. Have the pairs of children stand facing each other. One child of each pair wears the

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mirror. The other child is asked to make movements such as combing hair, brushing teeth, making a silly face, etc. The mirror child must mimic the actions of the other child. You can play music during this game varying the speed to get different types of motions. Also suggest movements such as hopping, waving arms, twirling around, swimming, and so on. After a while, have children trade places so each child can both the mirror and the mime.

Connection Circle This is a game of friends and cooperation. Gather your children in a circle on the floor (sitting). Take a large ball of thick yarn and wrap one end around one child's waist. Then the ball of yarn is passed to the next child in the circle who wraps it around her waist. The ball is passed around the circle until all children are "woven" into one gigantic circle. Do this activity with soothing music playing in the background. Once "woven," try to stand and move slowly around the circle together.

A Portrait of Friends Friends can make portraits together. Provide large sheets of butcher paper and let children make full-body sketches. Have one child lie down onto the paper and have a friend draw the outline around him. Switch places have the other child do the drawing.

After the drawings are completed, the child paints his self-portrait on the paper with tempera paints. When the painted portraits are dry, cut around the outlined body. Tape these around the classroom and name this "A Circle of Friends."

"The More We Are Together" A Song for Friends (tune "Have You Ever Seen a Lassie")

The more we are together,
together, together,
The more we are together,
the happier we'll be.
For your friends are my
friends, and my friends are
your friends.
The more we are together the
happier we'll be.

We're here in school together,
together, together.
We're here in school together,
and happy we will be.
There's Johnny and Mary and
Susie and Bobby.
There's ______ and ______
and ________ and _______.
We're here in school together
and happy we will be.

Friendly Voices Make a cassette tape of your children's voices. Set the tape recorder on a table where everyone can listen to the tape and try to guess which classmate is talking.

A Poem Gather children and together collect words of friendship. Transform words into poetry using the Haiku format.

First line — 5 syllables
Second line — 7 syllables
Third line — 5 syllables

Here is one example:

HAVING FRIENDS IS FUN,
LAUGHING, PLAYING
AND SHARING,
MAKING MEMORIES.

FRIENDLY GAMES

by Jeannine Perez

Competition is a part of life but children need help to learn how to be good sports. Handling competition with grace is a learned process. Young children cannot easily cope with games where there is one winner. It's even harder to be the winner and not gloat over the others. Planning games and activities that help children grow in physical skills and providing a nonthreatening environment where they can also learn sportsmanship and cooperative play can be tricky, but it is so rewarding for everyone who takes part.

Drama and storytelling help children verbalize their feelings about winning and losing.

☺ Role play stepping into another's shoes. *"How do you think Little Bear felt when Goldilocks broke his chair?"* Acknowledgment of feelings and awareness of the feelings of others is a giant step. Collect a file of "what if" situations for group discussions. *"What if your sister got the toy you wanted for Christmas?" "What if you want to play a game with Brent, and he would rather build blocks by himself?"* Encourage children to brainstorm more that one solution to each problem, and then discuss which one would be best for the situation. Tell children that sometimes the silliest solutions are the best.

☺ Divide into two teams and stage an invisible tug-of-war, or pass an invisible ball. No one wins because the contest ends in laughter.

☺ Play Magic Blob. Ask children to sit in a circle and say, *"Make believe I have something in my hand. I think it is a ball of clay."* Demonstrate several things you could do with your invisible blob. Stretch it and bounce it, then pass it to the child sitting next to you. Pretend the invisible object is an ice cream cone or a soft little kitty. This is a quieting game.

☺ Learn nonverbal ways to be kind. Pass a message. It could be a hand hug or squeeze, then try passing on smiles or back rubs.

Use storytelling times to reinforce ideas of sharing and cooperation.

☺ Try circle stories that are group stories. Take turns tossing a beanbag. Start a story and toss the bag to a child. The catcher must add (even a few words) to the story that you have begun; then toss the bag to another child.

You can also spin stories with a yarn ball. Cut different lengths of yarn and wind them all into a fat ball. The first child begins to slowly unwind the ball as he starts telling the story. When he comes to the end of the yarn, he passes the yarn ball to another child and the story goes on.

Plan prizes to celebrate everyone's efforts.

☺ Make ribbons or certificates for all participants in special activities. For example, we had a Tom Turkey contest in which every turkey won a prize. We had ribbons for the scariest, funniest, the most surprising, the friendliest and soon. The contest was fun for all of the young artists and for the judges who had to plan many creative categories.

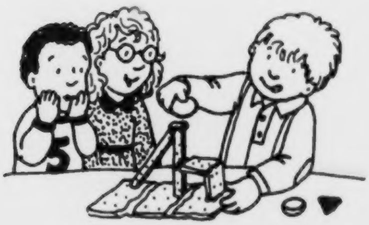
Laughter and compliments are antidotes to serious competition.

☺ When we can laugh at ourselves, everyone becomes a winner. *"How would you walk if you were waist high in* *water? Going down hill on roller skates? On a cloud? Glued down to the floor? Alone on a dark and scary street?"*

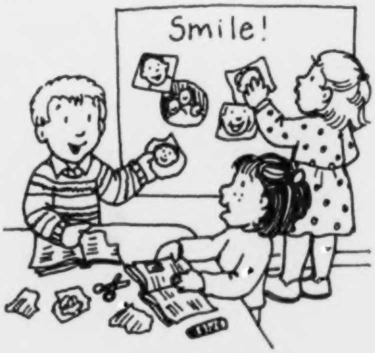
☺ Give silly choices to your children sitting in a circle. Stretch their imaginations. *"Would you rather be a potato chip or ice cream? Why?" "Would you rather have purple or green hair?"*

Plan activities as cooperative projects.

☺ Make a snack food sculpture. Let everyone take turns putting together a strong base of crackers cemented together with cream cheese mixed with sour cream. Then go around the table and help each child choose building materials. Supply bread sticks, all shapes of crackers, pretzels. Then decorate the sculpture with popcorn. Admire the group effort and take a picture of it, then tear it apart and eat with gusto.



☺ Create a piece of cooperative art each day. Get out your box of paper scraps (Use holiday colors.) and make a montage. Pass out old magazines and work together to find pictures of people smiling, then glue them to a posterboard for a Smile Collage. Try a group Sky Sculpture. Hang a sturdy branch or wreath from the ceiling and help children work together to hang objects and papers to make a hanging sculpture. Group activities are fun and the results are owned by all.



☺ Work together to make a creative hanging to decorate the center. Use nine-by-twelve-inch pieces of felt and help each child decorate with fabric scraps. Glue on the design or use markers to outline shapes. Sew the rectangles together into a banner and hang it. This is a great project because it is a cooperative one that retains each individual idea. Ask for parent volunteers to help with this project if possible.

Practice to increase strength and skills, and make the competition one of beating one's own record.

☺ Do a total group stretch. Sitting in a circle each person takes a turn, stretching a different body part in a different way; then all follow.

☺ Plan very simple games: group scavenger hunts and No-touch fighting. (Tell children that all movements must be in slow motion, and you cannot touch anyone else.) Do so in an environment of laughter and safety.

☺ By trying only to beat one's own score, everyone wins.

Cooperative spirit and teamwork are encouraged, group skills enhanced, and it's fun besides. Prepare children for the inevitable competition later in life by helping them increase their self-esteem and self confidence and working on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills now. As young children gain in these skills, they will begin to be comfortable taking the risk to win or lose, and will see games as they are—games for fun.

COOPERATION AND MOVEMENT

by Sharon Scherr

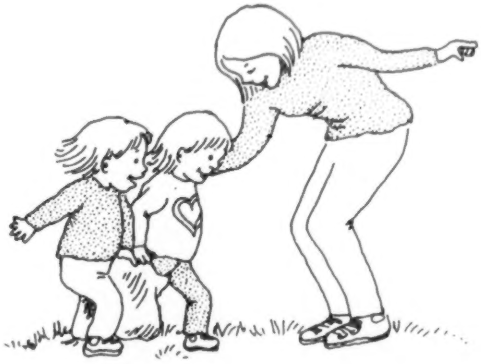
The theme of FRIENDS AND FAMILY provides us with a wonderful opportunity to use partner activities as part of the curriculum. Partner activities encourage children to cooperate and work as a team to accomplish a specific goal. Children will notice and compensate for a variance in skill levels as they work to accomplish the goal. They will become sensitive to the needs of others.

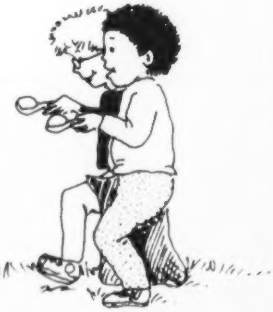
Family members could automatically be partners. Friends could form pairs by matching letters, numbers, colors, or pictures of animals.

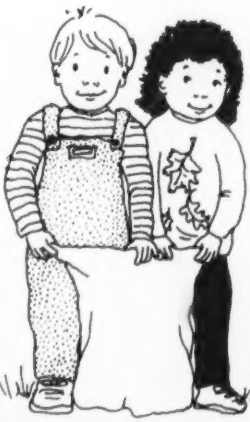
PILLOWCASE PAIRS

Have partners stand side-by-side while you help each pair place their inside legs into a pillowcase. As soon as the partners are organized, let them begin to practice walking forward, backwards, and sideways. Teams should use the entire available space in the room. Since there are no lines, time is not wasted waiting to take a turn. Children move freely through the room always showing respect for all participating pairs. Higher skilled children use more complicated movement patterns, while others simply move forward. Mixed skill level pairs compensate for each other.

Add an additional challenge to the activity by having each person carry a plastic golf ball on a spoon. Test agility by providing an opportunity for pillowcase pairs to move sideways across a low balance beam while carrying the balls.







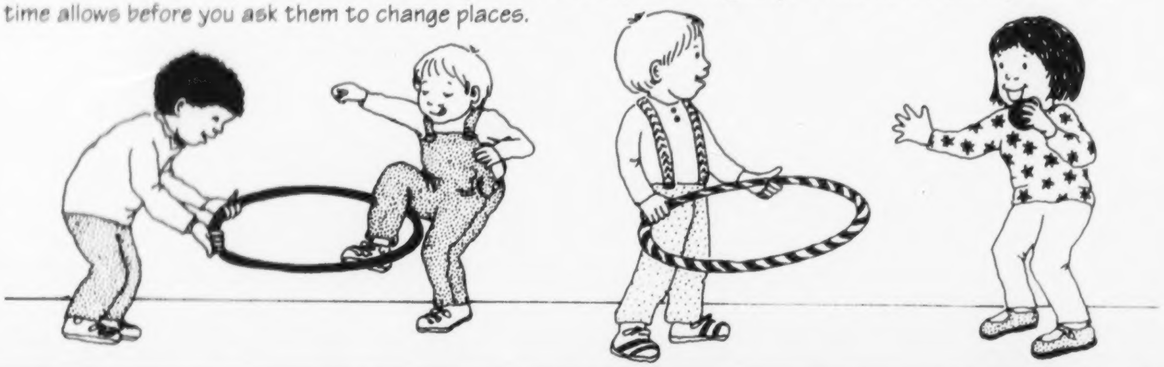
HOOP-LA

Have children sit down to listen while you give complete and specific directions for this activity. Pass out equipment after directions have been given. (Children will want to explore equipment as soon as they receive it, and therefore they may not listen for instructions.)

In this activity, children will practice throwing skills. One partner holds a hoop out to the side while the other partner throws a ball through this hoop. A larger ball is easier for young children. The child throwing the ball retrieves the ball and takes as many turns as time allows before you ask the partners to change places. Faster moving children will naturally have more turns during the allotted time available, and this is a healthy way to keep these children occupied and safe. Children with higher developed throwing skills should be encouraged to step back from the hoop to create a greater throwing distance. The throwing distance can be maintained by having children stand on a carpet square.

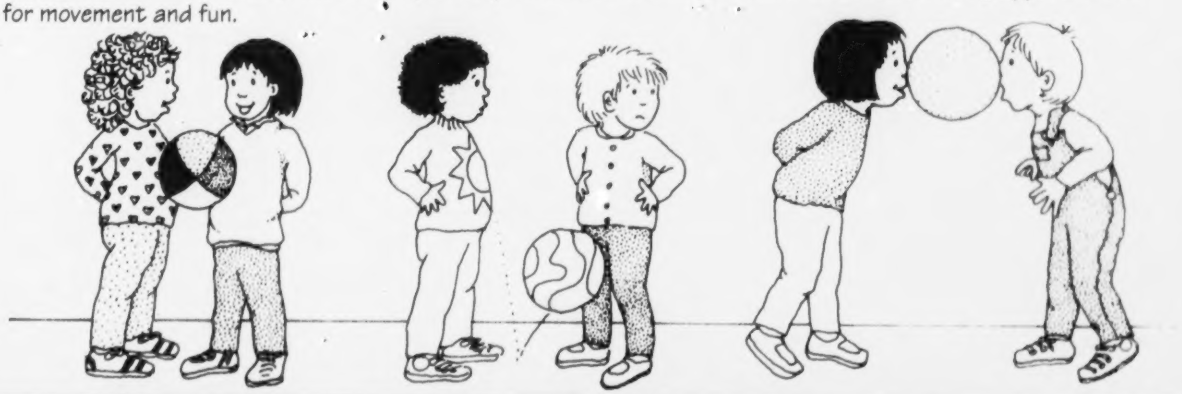
Children will have a better understanding of the activity if you demonstrate as well as tell them what to do. Consider various learning styles when giving directions to make sure that everyone understands. After all instructions have been given, give children hoops and balls. Let partners spread out to play the game. After changing places a few times, have one partner place the balls in a basket.

The activity will now change. One partner will take a turn jumping in and out of the hoop while the other partner holds the hoop a few inches off and parallel to the ground. Again pairs will have as many turns as time allows before you ask them to change places.



CARRY THE BALL

After hoops are placed in a pile, pairs gather on one side of the room and each pair is given a large ball. Pairs work as a team to carry the ball across the room using the specific body part that you suggest. For example you might say, *"Use your hands to carry the ball across the room."* Play lively music during this activity. Pairs move back and forth across the room while the music is playing. When you stop the music, suggest a new way to carry the ball. If you stop and start the music often, there will be many opportunities for movement and fun.



DEVELOP LANGUAGE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

by Karen Stephens

One of the most unique aspects of the human species is our complex system of communication. Humans have used their great brain power and strong family attachments to survive and evolve into excellent communicators. When you stop to think of it, it's amazing how quickly—within weeks of birth—infants learn to use nonverbal communication to make their needs known. And not long after, they begin to use a wide variety of expressions and vocalizations to clue others into their emotions and feelings.

Immersed in the dialogue of a loving family, children quickly learn to understand spoken language (often referred to as receptive language). By two years of age, most children can use verbal language with others (referred to as expressive language). By age three, children can be fluent in their native or home language, as well as several others! Our program just enrolled a child whose first language is Japanese, her second is English, and third is Korean. She's way ahead of her teachers in terms of her language versatility! I can only wish such a gift for all children.

In early childhood classrooms, curriculum activities, specifically language arts, should capitalize on the fertile foundation the home environment contributes to children's language development. Classroom language arts activities should encompass all the wonderful methods—nonverbal as well as verbal—that children can use to communicate their thoughts, ideas, feelings, hopes, and dreams.

The four basic areas of language arts include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Activities related to any of those four areas help children become skilled in using language effectively, productively, and constructively. Linking activities to friends and families is a perfect way to motivate children to use all four areas of language arts! After all, children learn best what is meaningful and relevant to their everyday lives. What could be more relevant than communicating with those you'll love for a lifetime?

Below are activities geared to engage children in realistic language experiences that will contribute to the quality of their everyday lives. Helping children see the role that language arts plays in the "adult" world will stimulate them to develop and use a diverse variety of communication skills themselves. An important by-product will be the close ties children form and maintain with friends and family.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

- During group time, read picture books about family and friends. During small group play, let children take turns "reading" the stories to others. Encourage children to "act out" a story or use puppets to retell a story. (Librarians are great resources for lists of good children's books about a diverse array of families.)
- Rotate themes in the dramatic play center regularly. A housekeeping or family living theme encourages children to use language to explore parental and sibling relationships. But you can also further children's language skills by highlighting parents' different professions, especially if they relate to the language arts. Does one of your classroom's parents work at a radio or television station? Is one an actor or an actress? A stenographer? A court reporter? A librarian? Postal carrier? Telephone operator? All of these occupations require a high level of communication expertise. They also include "props" that motivate children to engage in complex and detailed dramatic play. What child can resist talking into a

microphone or pretending to be on television?

- Use a tape recorder to collect oral histories of families. Let children use a tape recorder to answer questions about families that you develop beforehand. Encourage children to collect family history by "interviewing" parents using the tape recorder. Once a tape is made, encourage the family to listen to the tape at home or in the car.
- Ask children to conduct surveys to create a graph of information about the classroom's family characteristics. For instance, children can ask how many children are in each family. You can help children record the proper number on a bar graph designed just for this purpose. Other questions might include: Do grandparents live with you? What ages are your brothers and sisters? Does your family have a pet? On vacations, does your family like to camp in a tent or stay in a hotel? Does your family live in the city or the country?
- Don't forget to set out the good, old-fashioned doll house. When equipped with props (which represent diversity in terms of age, gender, and race), children can use language as they explore family relationships and household living.

WRITING AND READING

- Let children create and send postcards (or holiday cards) made from tagboard. After illustrating one side, children can "write" (at their ability level) to friends and family. Use telephone books and zip code books to find correct addresses. This shows how literacy is relevant to everyday life.
- As a parent-child event, plan a potluck where children will be host to their families. Engage children in planning the menu, creating the shopping list, and shopping for and buying ingredients. Allow them to help prepare at least one food, thus showing them the importance of being able to read and follow a recipe. Potlucks including foods from cultures represented in your classroom enrollment are always fun and interesting. During this time of year, favorite holiday treats can be tasty as well as educational.
- Let each child create a "My Family and Friends" picture book. Ask each family to send a photo album and a selection of family and friends photos into school with their child. (Photo albums with magnetic pages are the easiest, but don't place priceless, or irreplaceable, family photos in them. Magnet albums damage photos over time.)

Children place photos on each page. On index cards, record information children relay about each photo. (You can illicit children's comments by asking questions.)

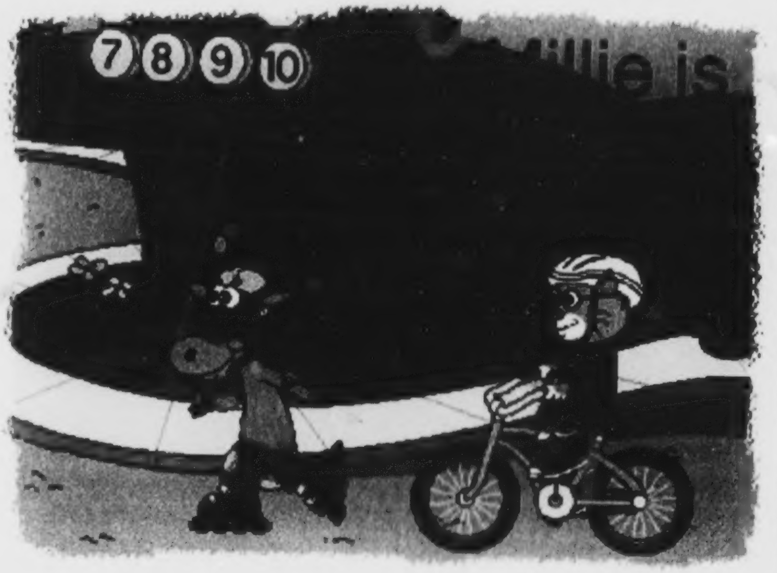
Children can also write about the photos themselves. And of course, children's drawings can illustrate the book right along with the actual photographs. Children can take their picture book home or place it in your book reading area for classmates to enjoy.

- Field trips are great ways to stimulate language while learning about friends and family. Does the family of one of your children hail from a different part of the country or the world? Ask that family if children can visit the home to see family culture and customs in action. Children are bound to ask lots of questions and make plenty of comments. After visiting the home, make sure children dictate a thank you letter and create thank you pictures for the host family. Field trips to parents' workplaces are also great communication experiences.

The more clearly and creatively children learn to communicate their needs and ideas, the more successful they will be in school and life. Use these suggestions to creatively plan your own activities.

OLD FRIENDS ON THE COMPUTER

by Evelyn J. Woldman



Those of you who have already jumped on the "little red wagon of the 90's".. otherwise known as technology, will no doubt be familiar with a set of characters who predominate the early childhood screens, both in the home as well as in the school market. These characters were created by Edmark Corporation, and they can be found in the "House Series" of programs. Each program emphasizes another subject area at the very beginning levels, and each program is built on the success of the one which preceded it.

The titles are as follows:

- *Millie's Math House*
- *Bailey's Book House*
- *Sammy's Science House*
- *Trudy's Time and Place House*

Several of these programs have been reviewed and recommended in this column, and they have received accolades and awards from many other places. Now, Edmark has come up with a software program which takes the characters from each of the other titles and combines them into a unique, beginning storytelling and writing program. The title of this program is: *Stanley's Sticker Stories*.

Stanley is a bright and friendly sea otter. He acts as a guide in helping children explore the early learning neighborhood where each of the houses is occupied by children's familiar friends, Millie, Bailey, Sammy, and Trudy. Both readers and nonreaders can join in the fun as they create stories with stickers, backgrounds, animation, sound effects, music, and their own recorded speech. The user is provided with over 325 stickers, showing the characters in different poses, and with different costumes, intended to match the various backdrops that can be used. In addition to creating the stories from scratch, children can choose from a variety of font sizes, background music, and their own recordings to add to the effect of their stories.

For those youngsters who have a hard time getting started, there is a section called "Story Ideas" which they can access at any time and which will give them some new ideas with which to work.

A special Sticker Spelling Book lets children see and hear the spelling of any sticker they select. *Stanley's Sticker House* is a fabulous road to language development, as youngsters greet these characters as old and trusted friends whom many have seen and with whom they have interacted before!

Stanley's Sticker House has won numerous awards including:

- 1997 Thunderbeam Seal of Approval (check their web site—it's cool!)
- 1997 Family PC, Top Rated Award in the Best Software for ages 3-6 Category
- 1997 Anders Medallion, Andiron Press
- 1996 Newsweek Editors Choice Award

... and lots more, including my favorite:

- 1996 Mom's Choice Award, Multimedia Mom

Enjoy this as well as Edmark's other fine titles! They're all award winners!

Scott
Julie
Jen
Hillary
Hali
Damon
Jose

Let's Be Friends

by Barbara Fischer

Thanksgiving is a busy time at school. There are turkey decorations to make and new games and songs to try. Somehow in the midst of all these activities, we tend to lose the meaning of the holiday. It's no wonder we do, for it is a difficult concept for young children to grasp. This year try presenting the themes of friendship and family during the Thanksgiving season.

During circle time ask children what a friend is. You might begin the discussion by saying that friends help each other, share with one another, and are nice to each other. This is a good time to reinforce some social skills. Role play taking turns sharing toys. Help children use words, not hands, to make their needs known.

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

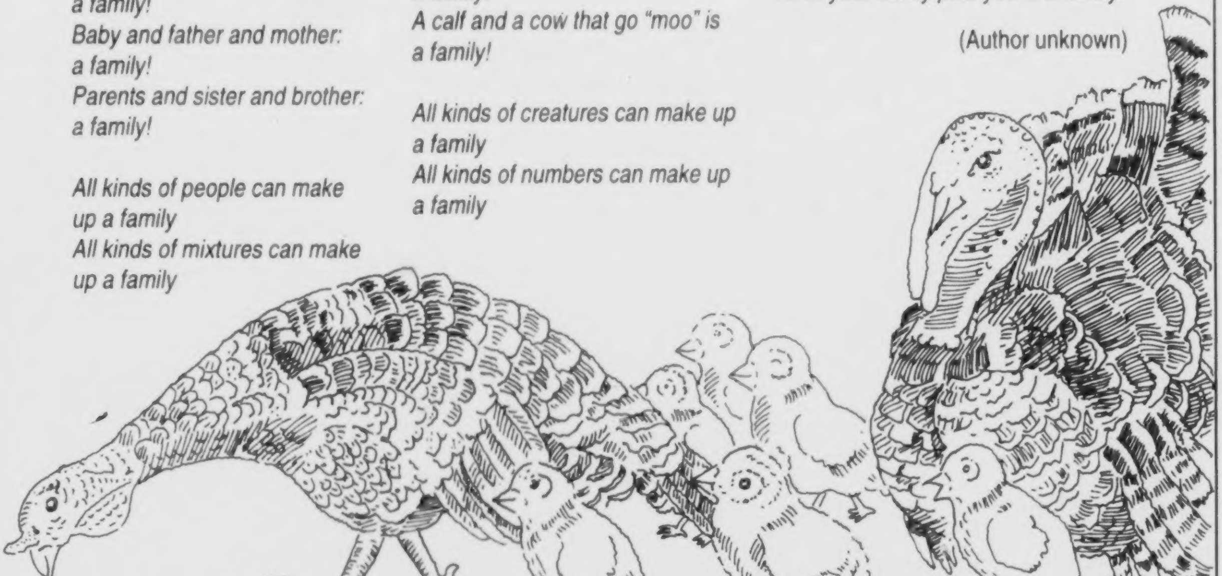
Read this poem about families at circletime.

What is a family?
Who is a family?
One and another makes two is
a family!
Baby and father and mother:
a family!
Parents and sister and brother:
a family!

All kinds of people can make
up a family
All kinds of mixtures can make
up a family
What is a family?
Who is a family?
The children that lived in a shoe is
a family!
A pair like kanga and roo is
a family!
A calf and a cow that go "moo" is
a family!

All kinds of creatures can make up
a family
All kinds of numbers can make up
a family
What is a family?
Who is a family?
Either a lot or a few is a family;
But whether there's ten or there's two
in your family,
All of your family plus you is a family!

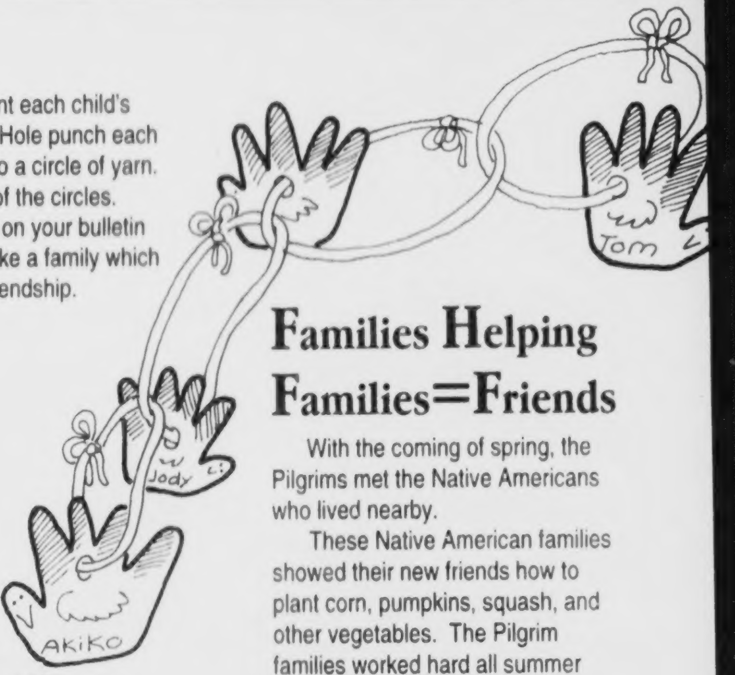
(Author unknown)



Spend some time talking about Moms, Dads, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and other family members. Encourage children to think about who makes up their families. Are all families the same? Where do families live? Do some families live in apartments, houses, or together with other families? During art time, each child can show her own family by making a family tree. Provide a tree with several branches cut from brown paper to glue on a background of light blue paper. Glue large, green, random-shaped circles to the branches. Print each family member's name on these "green leaves." Include any person (or pet) the child names. Finish by printing the child's name on the trunk. Ask children to bring in a picture of themselves to place next to their tree.

Make a Friendship Chain

Help children create a friendship chain to show that they are all friends. Have each child trace her handprint on a piece of construction paper in her favorite color. Have children cut out their prints and add features to make turkeys. When they are finished, print each child's name on the turkey. Hole punch each turkey and attach it to a circle of yarn. Then make a chain of the circles. Hang the yarn chain on your bulletin board. The yarn is like a family which ties us together in friendship.

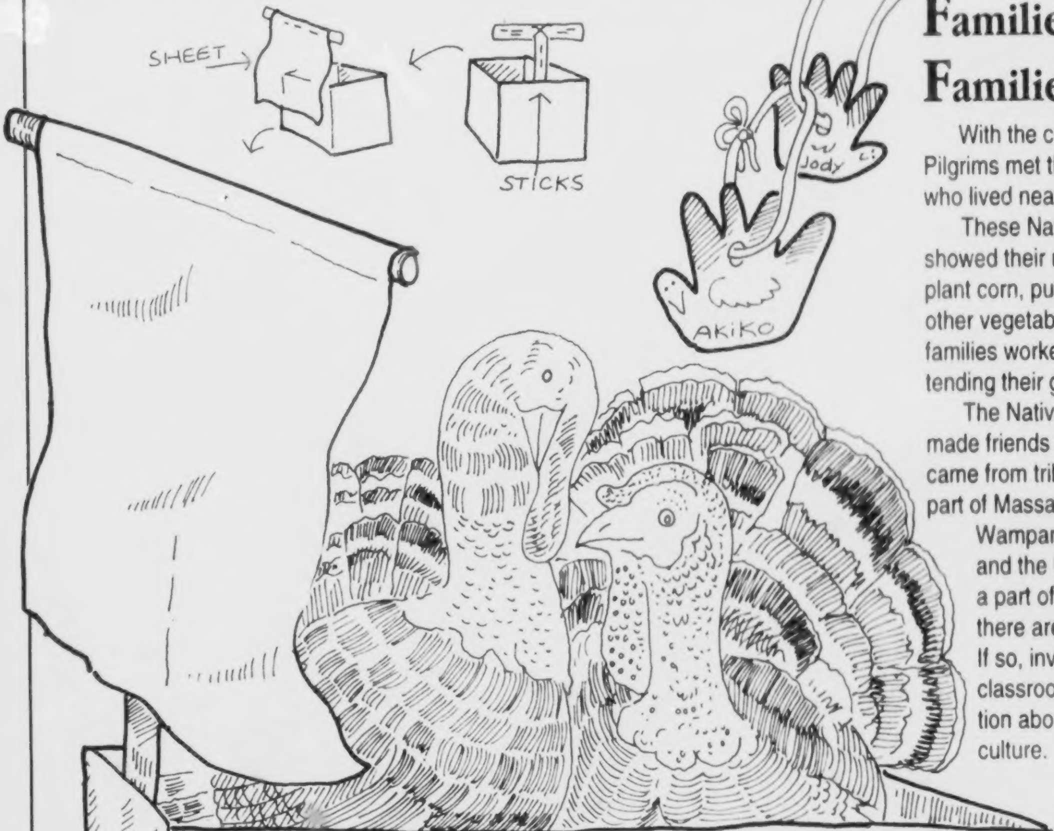


Families Helping Families=Friends

With the coming of spring, the Pilgrims met the Native Americans who lived nearby.

These Native American families showed their new friends how to plant corn, pumpkins, squash, and other vegetables. The Pilgrim families worked hard all summer tending their gardens.

The Native Americans who made friends with the Pilgrims came from tribes in the Eastern part of Massachusetts including the Wampanoags, the Pemaquids, and the Nauset. Do you live in a part of the country where there are Native Americans? If so, invite one to visit your classroom and share information about his traditions and culture.



Family Adventure

Read a seasonal book such as *Thanksgiving Day* by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House). As you read, call attention to the Pilgrim families who have left their homes to begin a new adventure in a new land. Let children create their own "Mayflower" ship from a large cardboard box. Paint the box and add a sail. To make the sail, tape a stick to the front of the box. Tape another stick crosswise near the top of the first stick making a T-shape. Drape a sheet over the cross stick and secure the top with tape or staples. Sail away!

But before you leave, ask children what they would bring on a long trip across the ocean. Their favorite toy would be one item they would want to have with them. Clothes and food would be on the list, too. The Pilgrims brought these things; they also brought seeds to plant, tools to build houses, and supplies for the colony.

Harvest Time

The corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash all grew well in this new land. When the time came to harvest the crops, the Pilgrims wanted to share their food with their new friends, the Indians. So they prepared a great feast. Invite your children to take part in some similar preparation activities of the first Thanksgiving.

Horn of Plenty Explain that a horn of plenty is a basket that holds vegetables and fruit. It means that the harvest was plentiful that year. If possible, bring a real one to class. Then cut large circles out of brown construction paper. Cut a radius of the circle and fold to make a cone. Secure with tape or a stapler. Let children decorate this "horn of plenty." Then give children nuts, dried flowers, and fruits to put in their horns. Show them how to put the horn on its side so that the insides spill out a little.

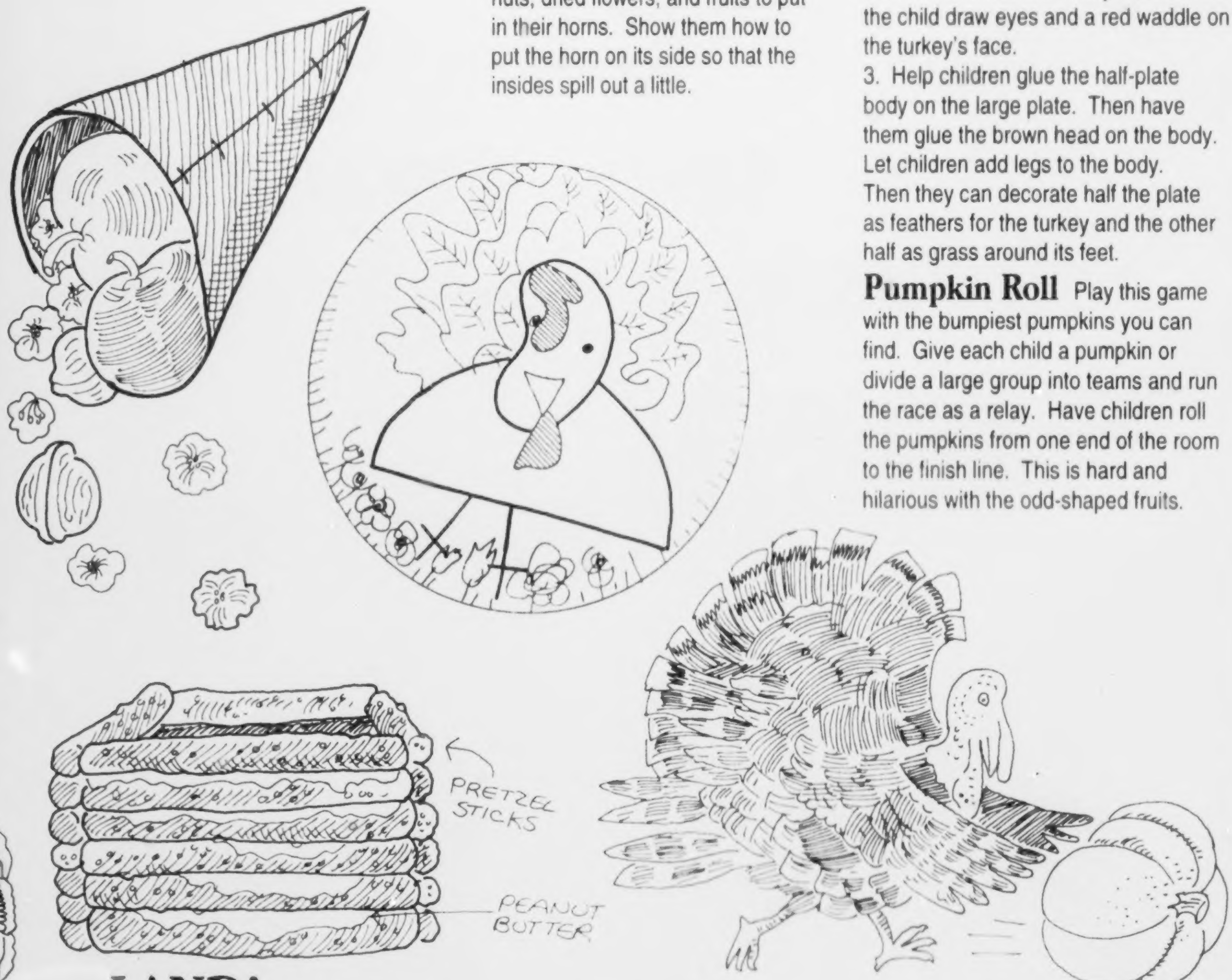
Paper Plate Turkey Place Mats

You'll Need: large paper plates ▲ small paper plates ▲ brown construction paper ▲ scissors ▲ glue ▲ crayons or markers

What to Do:

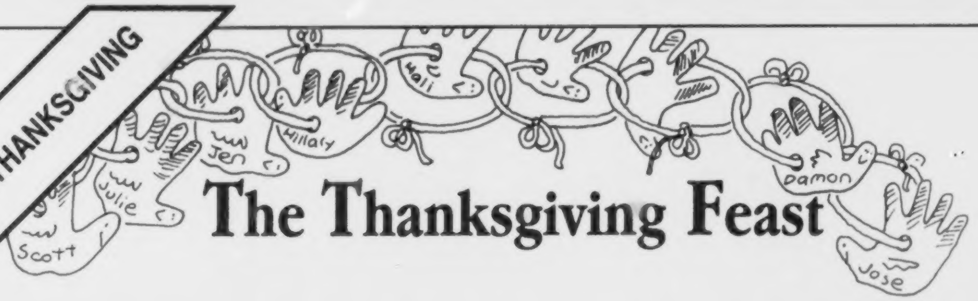
1. Cut small paper plates in half. These will be turkey bodies.
2. Trace around each child's foot on brown construction paper. Have the child cut it out. This is the turkey's head. Have the child draw eyes and a red waddle on the turkey's face.
3. Help children glue the half-plate body on the large plate. Then have them glue the brown head on the body. Let children add legs to the body. Then they can decorate half the plate as feathers for the turkey and the other half as grass around its feet.

Pumpkin Roll Play this game with the bumpiest pumpkins you can find. Give each child a pumpkin or divide a large group into teams and run the race as a relay. Have children roll the pumpkins from one end of the room to the finish line. This is hard and hilarious with the odd-shaped fruits.



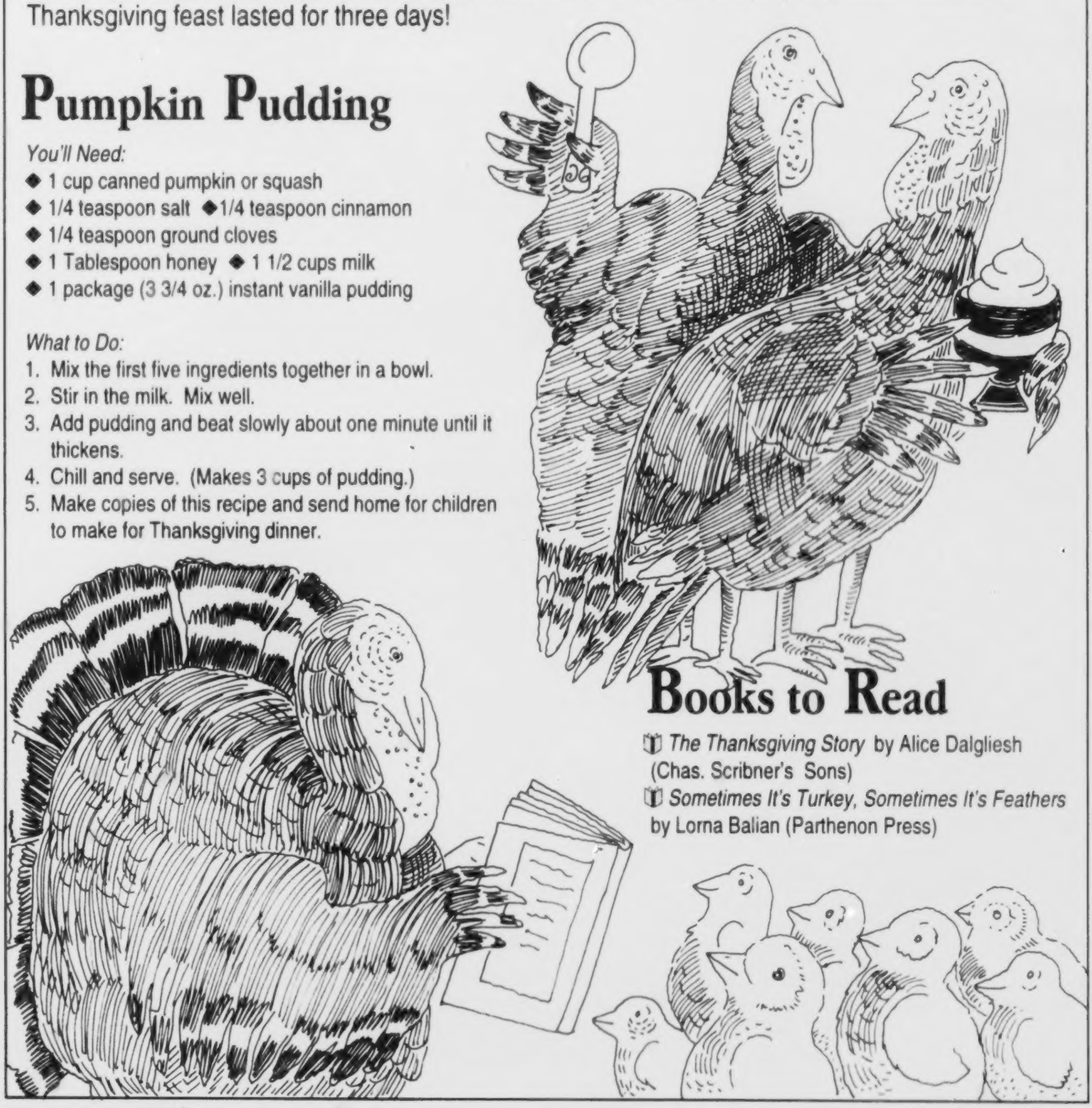
LAND! What do you think the families found in their new land? The weather was cold that winter when they landed and there were no houses to call home. If possible, show children pictures of log houses that the Pilgrims built for their families. If you have *Lincoln Logs*, make some houses. Then have fun making log houses from straight pretzels using peanut butter "mortar." Use the pretzels as you would the *Lincoln Logs*. The peanut butter holds the pretzels together at the ends. Can children finish the houses before they are eaten?

You can send for an information portfolio on the Pilgrim village by writing to: Plimoth Plantation, The 1627 Pilgrim Village, Plymouth, MA 02360.



The Thanksgiving Feast

The Pilgrims wanted to share the food that they had grown with their new friends who helped them that first winter. They cooked a great feast of turkey, cornbread, beans, and pumpkins. The Native American families came and also brought food. They ate and played games. That first Thanksgiving feast lasted for three days!



Pumpkin Pudding

You'll Need:

- ◆ 1 cup canned pumpkin or squash
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon salt ◆ 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- ◆ 1 Tablespoon honey ◆ 1 1/2 cups milk
- ◆ 1 package (3 3/4 oz.) instant vanilla pudding

What to Do:

1. Mix the first five ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Stir in the milk. Mix well.
3. Add pudding and beat slowly about one minute until it thickens.
4. Chill and serve. (Makes 3 cups of pudding.)
5. Make copies of this recipe and send home for children to make for Thanksgiving dinner.

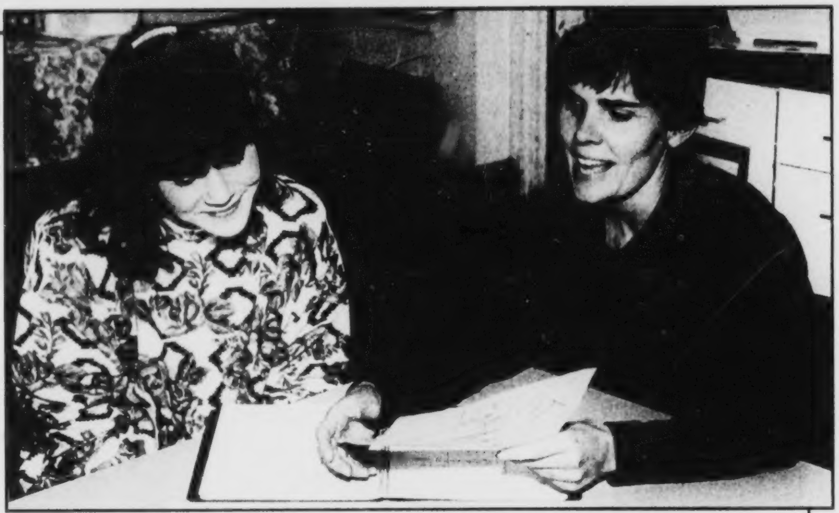
Books to Read

📖 *The Thanksgiving Story* by Alice Dalgliesh (Chas. Scribner's Sons)

📖 *Sometimes It's Turkey, Sometimes It's Feathers* by Lorna Balian (Parthenon Press)

BE A REACHABLE TEACHER

by Margery A. Kranyik



In an already busy day, it may be necessary to take an extra step toward being a "reachable" teacher. Reach out to whom? Families of the children in your class—parents, grandparents, and caregivers. The bonds of fellowship that teachers form with families just may help a child tune in to exploring and discovering the joys of learning.

Family members may stay away from school classrooms for a variety of reasons. Some may lack transportation; fear an unsafe neighborhood alone or after dark, or not have reliable child care for other children. Still others may have had poor experiences themselves or may be unable to read announcements or newsletters inviting them to an Open House, parent conferences, or special events.

As you evaluate your program, give thought to ways in which you can solidify and refine the partnerships you form with the families you serve.

▶ Be available for conferences at the convenience of the family member who may not be able to visit at specified times. If it means coming to school earlier or staying later, make appropriate arrangements to be there.

▶ Determine what type of scheduling works best for the majority of families. Perhaps both daytime and evening events will give everyone an opportunity to meet you and share their child's school environment.

▶ Make every effort to know the cultural values of the families in your school. Be knowledgeable of the service agencies that work with families to help them know what is expected in the school community. Many agencies offer help with language interpretation.

▶ Individuals are often uncomfortable admitting their literacy problems. Family members may be misunderstood when they ignore a notice because they are unable to read. Follow up with a phone call or a message with the child's neighbor. In a diplomatic manner, offer to "explain" a conference report or "clarify" a newsletter item.

▶ Encourage family conference visitors to discuss issues at home that might be affecting a child's behavior at school. Some may not realize that issues such as parent separation, ill siblings, aged relatives coming to live at their home, the possibility of moving; and neighborhood violence may cause a child to worry or be angry, thus causing a behavior to change. Have a list of community services that can provide assistance to families on issues with which you may not be experienced.

▶ Develop a family network. Let families know that they are not alone with problems and with issues of educating children. Help families, who are new to the area or who need support, find each other.

▶ Have an Open Door policy that welcomes families to your classroom whenever they have extra time or time off from work.

▶ Be your own public relations advocate within the community. Invite local leaders to take part in special events. Establish your reputation as a welcoming and nurturing teacher who has the interest of all children and their families at heart.

▶ Tell families AND children that you care about them and expect them to assume some classroom responsibilities. Most folks, children and adults alike, feel more comfortable knowing what type of behavior and performance you expect of them.

▶ Cultivate a trusting, relaxed environment and maintain a sense of humor! When the word gets out that you are there for families, they will be there for you!

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

by Barbara F. Backer

It happens every day. Parents come to pick up their children and they say to us, *"Hi! How was his day?"*

Often we describe all the wonderful things the child has accomplished since arriving at school, but just as often we unload on parents every misdeed their child has done, large or small.

This is NOT what parents want to hear.

If you and I pass in the grocery store aisle and you say, *"Hi! How are you?"*, you don't really want to hear a long list of my complaints. Indeed, you expect me to say, *"Fine! How are you?"* This is a social convention—a greeting between two people.

When parents walk into our classrooms at the end of the day, the social greeting they use is *"Hi! How was his day?"* They really aren't asking for a long, detailed description. They'd like a POSITIVE answer—and they'd like it to be SHORT.

Bad news is the last thing in the world they want to hear—especially from us! We are paid to make sure that every child in our care has the best day possible.

If their child is our star pupil, it's easy to find a short, positive answer: *"Wait until you see the painting Cary did at the easel today." "Ben's bean seed sprouted."* Why can't we do the same for our "difficult" children?

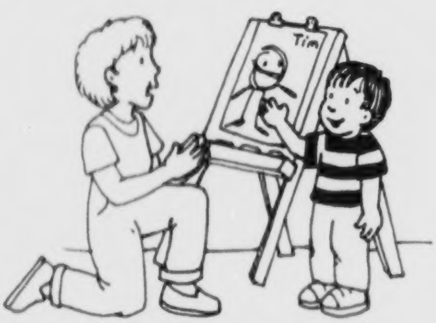
All day long, we notice children's accomplishments—large and small. These are the things parents want to hear about. Truthful, positive comments are easy to find if we make a point of looking for and remembering the positive events of each child's day. These sunny remarks are a welcome alternative to the daily "dumping" of negative news.

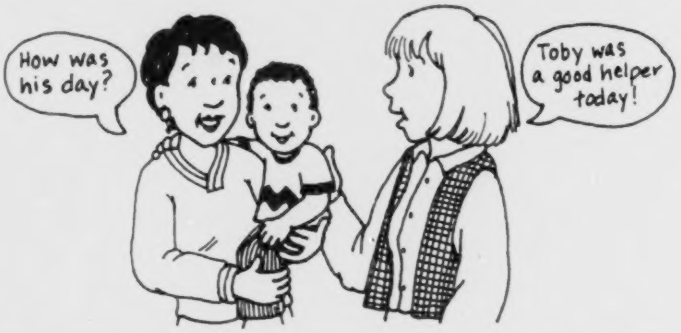
Remember to keep your response brief. There are many reasons for avoiding longer daily "chats" with parents. Like us, parents are tired after working all day. They still have many family responsibilities to face, and they are eager to move on to these.

Also, if we are standing at the door or the playground fence talking to a parent, who is interacting with the children? Who is supervising their safety? If our back is to the children, the parent we are talking with has a clear view of the chaos that erupts when children are not properly cared for.

When we discuss a child while we are standing in the classroom, all of the other children and any other parents who arrive during this conversation hear what we say. We are engaging in unethical behavior. Children's and parents' privacy rights must be honored.

So what should we do if we




How was his day?
Toby was a good helper today!

or the parents feel the need to share information?

Schedule a parent-teacher meeting at a time and place that assures you will not be interrupted. The child being discussed should NOT be present.

Before the meeting takes place, take time to think through what you need to discuss. Inform your director/principal that you and the parent will be meeting, and give the administrator a written list of what you will discuss.

Make notes for yourself, too, to use at the meeting.

Begin every conference with one or more positive comments about the child. Parents want to hear the best, and they are more likely to listen if they feel we like and care about their child.

State concerns objectively. Instead of saying, *“Joey is inconsiderate of others”* (a conclusion you've arrived at), tell parents the behaviors you've observed. *“On the playground Joey pushes smaller children out of the swing and then gets in it. During circle time he pulls items off the shelves and bangs them together making so much noise the other children and I can't hear each other. At lunch time, he eats off of other children's plates, and in art, he paints on other children's papers.”* This gives parents an accurate picture of Joey's behavior and allows them to draw their own conclusions.

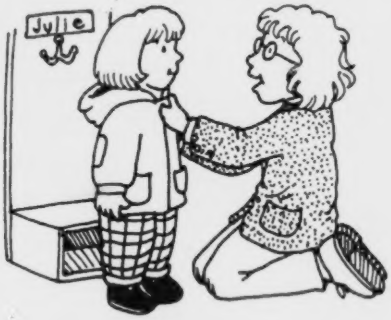
Looking at the behaviors objectively helps you and the parents pinpoint possible causes and solutions.

During the meeting, make notes of what you and the parents discuss and of how you decide to work on each problem TOGETHER. After you both sign and date the informal document, make a copy for the parent, one for yourself, and another for the director/principal. Begin the next conference by reviewing this document so that together you can measure the child's progress.

Always observe strict confidentiality regarding children and families. Never talk with parents about other parents or about other people's children. It isn't ethical. Unfortunately, many teachers learn this lesson the hard way— when the family that was talked about comes to school to complain to the teacher or the administrator.

End every conference with a positive comment about the child and a supportive comment about the parent. Let parents know that you understand the challenges of their role, and point out something that they are doing right—like attending the conference.

Remember that parents and teachers are partners in educating children. Together we prepare them to live as independent adults. Good communication is one of the principal keys to their success.



Marie is speaking up more!

FAMILY CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS

by Susan Entz

Planning an interesting curriculum that meets the needs of each child in the group can be a weighty responsibility. Have you ever considered recruiting "experts" to help you carry the load?

Your program has dozens of consultants, just waiting to be asked. They are "Family Curriculum Specialists." Parents, guardians, siblings, and extended family members can provide a wealth of information and life experience to support any unit of study.

Children benefit from interacting with a wide variety of caring adults who bring specific skills, diverse cultural backgrounds, and different points of view to the classroom. These experiences encourage youngsters to expand their egocentric thinking to accommodate and assimilate new ideas.

When planning a new theme, identify ways to encourage family participation. Here are a few ideas.

SURVEY INTERESTS AND SKILLS

Include in the registration packet a list of volunteer activities the family might be willing to provide for the school. As you explore each new theme, check the list to see who might be available for assistance.

☆ For example, Angela's mom had a new baby and couldn't volunteer in preschool often, but was very handy with a needle and thread. She was glad to be asked to make special outfits for dramatic play.

☆ And Patty's dad, a busy executive and closet carpenter, enjoyed occasional weekend work parties where he could build equipment.

☆ Tara's mom had Thursdays off and could stay to read to the children.

☆ Shirley's mom liked to cook and was willing to come to school to lead cooking activities.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

The reason most often cited for volunteering is because "someone asked." When you have a job in mind, use the newsletter or send home a special note to ask for assistance.

☆ One dad with "hidden" artistic talent was enthusiastic about painting a backdrop to a tale so children could act out the story.

VISITING EXPERT

Look for opportunities for family members to shine. Children love to have their relatives come to school to share their experiences. Find ways to highlight special life skills or experiences.

☆ Kunichi's big brother was a sushi chef. Clothed in his traditional costume, he brought all of the needed materials to teach children how to make sushi. Later, they set up their own sushi bar in the dramatic play corner.

☆ Auntie Doris loved to garden. She showed children how to set up an organic garden and came weekly to help them maintain it.

Before the visit, have children set up a place of honor where the visitor will sit, practice a greeting song or poem, and prepare a list of several questions they would like to ask. Have them prepare a small gift to thank the visitor for sharing time with the class.

PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

Build activities into the theme that require parent-child cooperation. Find a time that works for the families in your group: a few minutes at the beginning or end of the day or perhaps a lunch hour. Provide the materials and simple direction for each parent to work with his child to create a theme-related project.

☆ Help fathers to find the "perfect" Mother's Day gift by having a parent-child activity just before the holiday. It will be a gift to remember because it was made with love.

☆ Have a parent help the child make a fabric painted t-shirt to wear on an upcoming school field trip. For example, they might make wildlife sponge prints for a visit to the zoo.

PART-OF-THE-WHOLE ACTIVITIES

Look for activities that can be divided into parts that can be done at home and brought to school to be assembled into a group project. Set these up as parent-child home activities.

☆ For example, one day, children made a large turkey body for the bulletin board. That night each child was sent home with a large feather cut from tagboard with the request that she work with a parent to decorate it. As each colorful and unique feather was returned, it was added to the display. Parents were amazed at the result and each searched for his own special contribution.

MONDAY MUNCHIES

Ask each family to sign up for one Monday Munchy each quarter. The task is to make a snack over the weekend WITH their young child, who then brings it to school Monday to share with the class. This is a very positive parent-child home activity. (Remember to send a reminder home on Friday.)

CULTURAL AMBASSADOR

Take advantage of the diversity in your group. Encourage family members of different cultures to tell a story, read a book, sing a song, do a dance, or share traditional, ethnic food from their culture.

☆ A grandfather who grew up on the Island of Oahu shared photographs and stories of things he did during his "small boy time" with a group of preschoolers on the Island of Hawaii. He then sang a song in Hawaiian that featured that activity or place.

HELP WANTED

Pre-schoolers like to know what their parents do while they are at work. Invite parents to share their careers with the preschool class, either by coming to school as a guest speaker or by hosting a field trip to the work place.

☆ Nathan's father, a beekeeper, brought his protective gear, the smoker, and a honeycomb, during a springtime unit on flowers and pollination.

☆ Ruby's mom works at a gourmet chocolate factory. This field trip was a big hit!

FAMILY COOKBOOK

Ask each family to send in a favorite family recipe to be added to the class recipe book. They can also tell why the recipe is special. Then take a picture of the child and feature it, the recipe, and why it is special in a bound recipe book. Make a copy for each family as a holiday or end-of-the-year gift.

MUSIC PLEASE

Encourage family members who like to sing or play an instrument to perform for a school gathering. This can be in addition to a performance by children.

☆ Ask relatives who play an instrument to come to circle time to show children how it works and what it sounds like. Pre-schoolers will even be excited by an older sibling learning the tuba or the piccolo!

HOLIDAY MAGIC

Each family has their own special ways to celebrate winter holiday traditions. Invite a different family each day to share their unique approach to the holiday. This helps children to appreciate the idea that families come in all sizes and shapes and have all sorts of customs and beliefs.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

by Susan A. Miller, Ed.D

Some children are very fortunate to have their grandparents live nearby. On regular occasions they get to spend time together talking and doing everyday things, such as reading stories, sharing dinner, folding the laundry, brushing the dog, weeding the garden, and baking cupcakes.

Other children may have grandparents who live far away which creates somewhat of a generation gap as well as a geography gap. They may see each other every now and then during holidays or special visits. Activities for those families often center around celebrations, so children associate their grandparents with special foods, presents, and sleep-overs. During the in-between-times, families may try to stay connected through phone calls, postcards, photos, video recordings, and e-mail.

Because of a variety of reasons (death, divorce, etc.), a number of children may not have any grandparents. When children have limited experiences with older people, they often have stereotyped views of the elderly and perceive of them as wrinkled, tired, unattractive, grouchy, sick, or uninteresting.

Unfortunately, today great value is placed on independence rather than the wisdom of the elderly. To help your young children learn to celebrate diversity in people, you need to provide natural opportunities for intergenerational connections. You can help to see that there are daily chances for the young and elderly to observe each other as real people—inquisitive, enthusiastic, and lively!

WHERE TO FIND SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

If children's own grandparents aren't available, see if you can enlist the aid of some local seniors to serve as surrogates and become special friends with your young children. Check with Senior Citizen centers, churches, organizations like the Grange, retirement centers, and the National Foster Grandparent Program.

One of my children's most valued and greatly loved "Grandma Volunteers" was a school neighbor I carefully cultivated after a near disaster. My children accidentally kicked their ball (several times) into her flower bed, crushing the flowers. She thought they were "monsters." They thought she was "an old crab." I convinced her that if she would share her gardening talents with them, they would replant her garden—and change their kickball field. A beautiful intergenerational friendship grew throughout the year. She baked cookies for the children; they drew pictures for her—and watered and weeded her garden.

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

To help the young and old to establish bonds and develop friendships, shared activities must be interesting and as natural as possible. Some children will gravitate toward a special senior friend each time. Others are intrigued by specific activities; for example the reading of an old familiar story or the novelty of watching a kite flying demonstration. Give both ages plenty of time to become comfortable while they establish their relationships.

Some suggestions for activities to do together that have been successful in my classroom are; create a scrapbook about shared interests (pets, machines), make up stories with the senior and a child as the main characters, recite nursery rhymes, share individual collections, play games ("Go Fish," "Button, Button, Who Has the Button"), bake favorite foods—then eat them during "tea—" tell silly jokes, take a wildflower or bird walk, share skills and talents (One elderly gentleman rode his horse to the center so children

could pet it.) and, if your school policy allows it—give wonderful, reciprocal bear hugs!

One year, my pre-schoolers and the elderly residents of Oak Cottage at a local nursing home adopted each other. When the children visited the cottage, they sometimes brought along holiday tray decorations that they made at school or pictures they painted for a certain new friend. While together, they had song fests ("Jingle Bells," "Old MacDonald") or played homemade lotto games. "Feelie box" guessing games were popular, too. I placed jewelry, scarves and hats gathered at yard sales in a "Treasure Chest" to be used for delightful, spontaneous, dramatic play or storytelling props. The residents cut large magazine pictures into different shapes for puzzle surprises for intergenerational pairs to enjoy putting together. And both groups loved to receive mail so they drew and sent picture letters to each other in between visits. They also lovingly designed birthday and sick cards. These various personalized communications extended and enriched their growing friendships.

BOOKS TO SHARE

Here are some books that you may wish to share portraying the elderly and children in positive interactive relationships.

- In *Song and Dance Man* by K. Ackerman (Knopf), Grandfather shares a trunk full of props from his vaudeville day and puts on a great show.
- In *Stina* by L. Anderson (Greenwillow, a grandchild learns about the sea and a storm from her grandfather while visiting him in the summer.
- *Dear Annie* by J. Caseley (Greenwillow) tells the story of a young girl who saves all the letters and cards her penpal grandpa has written to her since she was born. She shares them at school.
- In *Bigmama's* by D. Crews (Greenwillow), the author tells of his childhood summer visits to his grandmother, "Bigmama."
- In *Tom* by Tomie DePaola (Putnam), Tommy and his grandfather, Tom, share a mutual sense of humor.
- In *Grandfather's Story* by Brenda Lena Fazio (Sasquatch Books), a Japanese grandfather wakes from a dream and promises to continue to teach his grandson to love and appreciate nature.
- In *Amazing Grace* by J. Hoffman (Dial), a young African American girl is encouraged to try out for a play by her supportive grandmother.
- In *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)* by E. Howard (Clarion), great-great Aunt Flossie entertains two sisters with tea, cookies, crab cakes, and stories about her hats.
- *My Island Grandma* by Kathryn Lasky (Morrow) and her granddaughter enjoy sailing in the Maine waters during a summer vacation at her cabin.
- In *Grandpa Abe* by Marisabina Russo (Greenwillow), Sarah and Grandpa Abe, Sarah's grandmother's second husband, share special times together until he dies when she is nine. How she remembers him is handled sensitively.
- In *Grandmother's Chair* by A. Scott (Clarion Books), three generations have sat in the chair and now grandmother is giving it to Katie.

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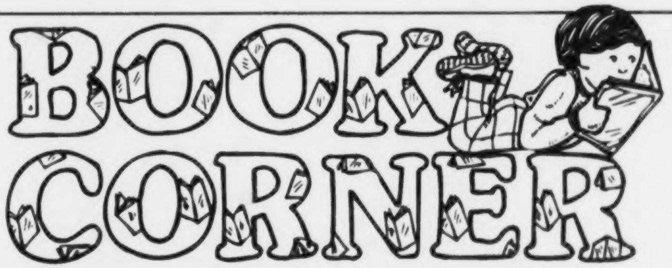


FAMILIES IN MANY CULTURES

by Karel Kilimnik

These books are anchored in different cultures but they all resonate with the special relationship between young and old. Some make you giggle or laugh; some get those tears streaming down your cheeks.

The little girl in *Yes, Dear* by Diana Wynne Jone (Greenwillow) finds a magic golden leaf while catching leaves with her older siblings. Every wish she makes such as making her sand pies and cakes real comes true. She rushes off to tell her mum who brushes her off with a *"Yes, dear...Run along and play and don't bother me now."* As the little girl tries to share her magic golden leaf and its powers with each family member, she's met with a similar refrain and ideas for her next magic wish. When she comes to her granny, the old lady opens up her arms to embrace her granddaughter and celebrate her magic golden leaf. Granny explains that she, too, once found a magic golden leaf.

That warmth of acknowledgment radiates from her grandmother's words and hugs reminding you of the importance of affirming young children's experiences and dreams.

Young Eddie Wing is fascinated by kites in *The Tiny Kite of Eddie Wing* by Maxine Trottier (Kane/Miller). He dreams of them and flies imaginary kites. His family is very poor and cannot spare any money to buy kite making materials.

Eddie's favorite event of the year is the Festival of Kites. Every year Old Chan offers a prize to the kite maker best fulfilling the test for the Festival of Kites. Old Chan had dreamed of being a poet when he was a child growing up in China. Coming to the United States Old Chan had to put aside his dream to earn money.

The prize for this year would be for the smallest kite. Old Chan sees Eddie flying his imaginary kite and connects his lifelong dream of writing poetry to Eddie's dream of making kites. Eddie received a precious gift from Old Chan. A gift from one dreamer to another.

Tony Johnston's book *Fishing Sunday* (Tambourine Books) could be about any grandfather/grandson living by the ocean but she has chosen a Japanese family.

The grandson is embarrassed by his Grandfather by his walking barefoot with his split, black toenails; by his shabby clothes and his limited English. But as the story unfolds, the young boy begins to see how others imitate his grandfather. He continually feels his grandfather's love through their little rituals on Fishing Sunday, and he begins to see how beautiful the old man truly is.

An earlier book by Tony Johnston, *Grandpa's Song* (Puffin Books) deals with an aging grandparent in a loving manner. Grandpa is born to sing or bellow depending on your opinion (and distance). Grandma rushes to straighten the pictures after her rotund husband belts out a tune. His grandchildren adore him and his songs and chants. He teaches them the best song in the world.

Then one day they're in the ice cream parlor after chanting their traditional *"I scream! You scream! We all scream for ice cream!"* when all of a sudden Grandpa looks puzzled and admits he has forgotten the words to the best song in the world. He forgets some more words to songs and seems very sad. His granddaughter has an idea—if everybody sang to him first, it would help him remember the words. It works! The illustrations in this book are as ebullient as Grandpa.

📖 In *Sachiko Means Happiness* by Kimoko Sakai (Children's Book Press), Sachiko shares her name with her Grandmother. It means happiness in Japanese. When Sachiko was born, her Grandmother loved her so much that she gave her her own name. Now Grandmother Sachiko is old and has begun to develop Alzheimer's and is living with her daughter's family.

Sachiko's mother asks her to watch her grandmother while she prepares dinner. Sachiko is very upset because her grandmother does not recognize her. On their walk her grandmother starts to cry. She says she wants to go home but doesn't know where she lives. Sachiko is very disturbed and slowly begins to realize that her grandmother thinks she is five years old again. Once Sachiko realizes this, she creates a plan of action to cope.

📖 Rosalba loves spending time with her *abuela* (Spanish for grandmother). Usually they take the bus to the park but on this day things happen a little differently.

Once they arrive at the park and start feeding the birds, Rosalba wonders, *"What if they picked me up, and carried me high above the park?"* Of course she'd swoop down to get her *abuela*! In *Abuela* (Dutton Children's Books), Arthur Dorros has created a lovely tale of their adventures flying over the city. *Abuela* speaks mostly Spanish because that is the language of the country where she was born and so the book is sprinkled with Spanish.

The colorful illustrations easily float over the city to give us a very different perspective on city life.

📖 *The Cemetery Quilt* by Kent and Alice Ross (Houghton Mifflin) deals with death. Josie's Papaw has died and her family goes to her Granny's house for the funeral. Josie is distraught. She packs the wrong dress to wear to the funeral and declares that she will not go look at her Papaw's body laid out in the casket.

Before the funeral, she stumbles onto the cemetery quilt, a family tradition started by her great-great-grandmother in the 1800's. Every living family's name is sewn on the outside border. Those who have died have their names stitched onto a little coffin in the middle of the quilt. At first Josie is repelled by the cemetery quilt that, to her, represents so much death, but her Granny helps her realize that death and memories are also important parts of life. The cemetery quilt is a way of recognizing that.

STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

CELEBRATE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

by Sandra Malcolm

During the winter holiday season, we often focus on family and friends. This is a wonderful time of year to read stories about the importance of families and friendships. The stories selected for this issue range from a brother's love for his baby sister to the love and friendship between a grandfather and his granddaughter.

CUDDLY DUDLEY

by Jez Alborough (Candlewick Press) is the story of Dudley who just wants to be alone, but his brothers and sisters find him just too cuddly. Soon Dudley discovers having friends and family around is okay.

BEFORE READING, show the cover of the book. Ask, *"What animal do we see on the cover?" "By looking at the picture, can we tell whether the story will be true or make-believe?"* Have children tell you what words like *cuddly* and *dudley* might mean. *"If I tell you Dudley is a name, whose name do you think it might be?"*

AFTER READING, ask, *"Who did we find Cuddly Dudley to be?" "Why was he named Cuddly Dudley?" "What was the only thing Dudley wanted?" "Did he get it?" "Why or why not?"* Discuss if Dudley was happy at the end of the story. *"Do you think we need friends and family?" "Why or why not?"*

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Provide materials for children to make penguins. Create a friendship bulletin board with the penguin. Provide wallpaper samples or wrapping paper to make shirts for the penguins.
- ◆ Ask, *"How did the author/illustrator help us to know which penguin was Dudley?"* Tell children to choose an animal to write a story about. Have them name their animal and help everyone know who the main character is in the story when they illustrate it.
- ◆ Find out where real penguins live. What is the weather like there? Display books and pictures of real penguins.

GRANDPA BUD

by Siobhan Dodds (Candlewick Press) is waiting for Polly to come stay overnight at his house. He is busy making her favorite foods when she calls and asks if she can invite a friend, then another; and then another. So many friends; so many favorite foods. What will Grandpa do?

BEFORE READING, have children tell you if they have ever gone somewhere to sleep overnight. Ask, *"Where did you go?" "What did you take with you?" "If you have ever gone to your Grandpa or Grandma's house to stay overnight, did they cook your favorite food?"*

AFTER READING, ask, *"Was Grandpa Bud surprised when Polly and her friends rang the doorbell?" "What was Polly's favorite food?" "Was Grandpa excited about making it for her and having her come to visit?" "How do we know?" "Was Grandpa happy to have Polly and all her friends stay overnight?"*

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Role play telephone conversations between Polly and Grandpa Bud. Discuss how to talk on the telephone.
- ◆ Have a class sleepover. Plan to spend the night at school with plenty of snacks, stories, and stuffed animal friends.
- ◆ Help Grandpa Bud cook all the favorite food for his guests. Have a cooking day; then enjoy what you make at lunchtime or snacktime.
- ◆ Encourage children to write their own story about sleeping overnight at someone's house. Share the stories.

NEW MOON

by Pegi Deitz Shea (Boyds Mills Press) is about a young boy who introduces his baby sister to the wonders of the moon. When the moon is not visible, he finds ways to satisfy her curiosity for the "*moooon.*"

BEFORE READING, share pictures of the moon in various phases. Discuss the appearance of the moon in each phase. Have children look up into the cold winter night sky. Ask, *"Is the moon always visible in the sky at night?" "Does it always look the same?" "Why or why not?" "What do you think a picture of a "new moon" will look like?" "Let's read and find out."*

AFTER READING, ask, *"Why do you think Vinnie's brother thought she might be excited about the moon?" "Why weren't they able to see the moon every night?" How did Vinnie's brother keep her excited about the moon even when they could not see it?"* Have children tell you when Vinnie and her brother see the moon again. Have children ever seen the moon in the daytime? Ask, *"How do we know the story takes place in the wintertime?"*

ACTIVITIES

◆ Help children do "moon research." Encourage them to find pictures of the moon in other picture books. Make a collection of moon stories.

◆ Using "glow-in-the-dark" paint, make a series of moon phases. Hang a different phase each day at rest time. Turn the lights out as you talk about what you see.

◆ Provide dark paper and white chalk or paint to encourage night painting.

◆ Sing songs and fingerplays about the moon. Encourage children to create their own songs about the moon.

◆ Tell children to pretend that they are a big brother or sister (some of them really are). What could they teach a baby sister or brother? Encourage children to make up a story about what they would teach. Have them make pictures to go with the story.

UNO, DOS, TRES: ONE, TWO, THREE

by Pat Mora (Clarion Books) describes how birthdays are wonderful times to celebrate. Two young girls enjoy counting gifts for their Mama in both English and Spanish.

BEFORE READING, bring in a birthday cake. Have ten candles on the cake. Count the candles in English and in Spanish. Sing "Happy Birthday." What do children think the story is going to be about?

AFTER READING, have children tell you whose birthday it was. Ask, *"Who was gathering gifts?" "Can we name the gifts?" "What do you think a piñata is?" "What are castanets?" "How did the girls count the gifts?"* Have children count to ten in English. Teach children to count to ten in Spanish. Find Mexico on a map. Find out how far Mexico is from where you live. Did children notice anything different about the words in the story? Discuss what we call words that sound the same. Find all the rhyming words.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Play music from Mexico. Encourage children to dance to the lively music.

◆ If possible, bring castanets to share with children.

◆ Using paper mache, make a piñata. Have children help design and construct the piñata. Plan a special celebration to dance and to break the piñata.

◆ Learn to say *"Happy Birthday"* in as many different languages as you can (including sign language). Make a number word chart for several different languages. Display the chart where children can use it in their play.

◆ Read *Tomorrow Is Daddy's Birthday* by Ginger Wadsworth (Boyd's Mills Press). Compare the stories.

◆ As a class, learn about Mexico. Display any objects you find from Mexico.

◆ How does your family celebrate birthdays or holidays? Write your own birthday story.

◆ Carefully look at and discuss the intricate drawings in the book. Look at the illustrations in *Mama, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse (Chronicle Books). Compare them to the illustrations in this story by the same illustrator.

EASY GIFTS FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

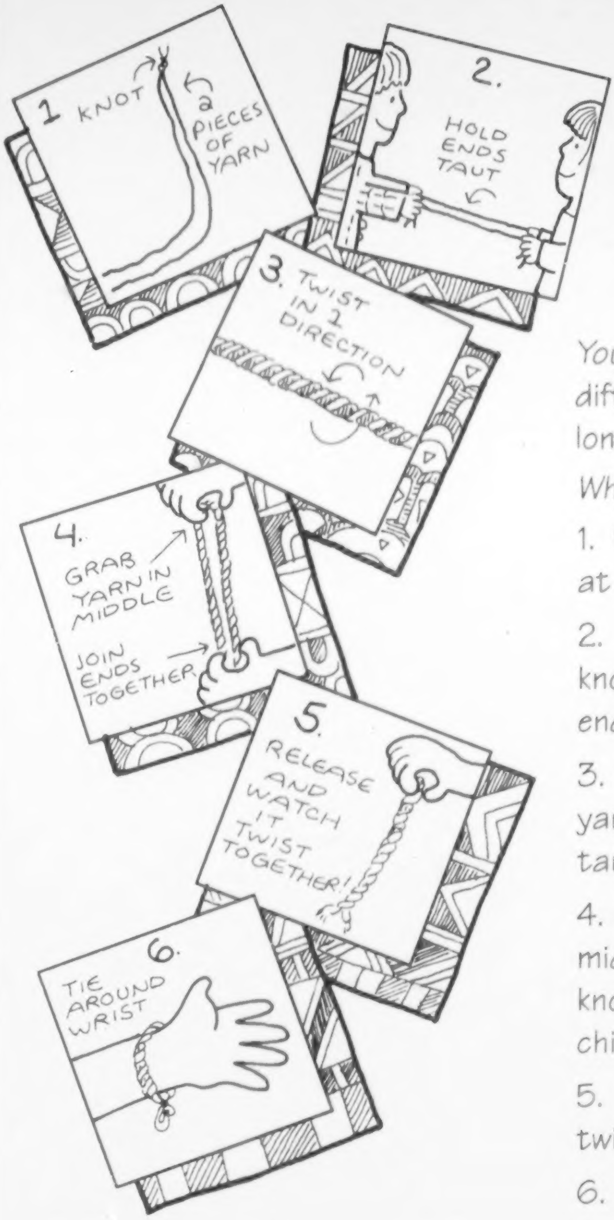
by Gail P. Jones

Every year around this time, we try to think of special gift ideas for family and friends. And, the one terrific source of ideas is right under our nose. The children! Eavesdrop on their conversations while at play to find out what's of the greatest interest this year. (I did that last year and purchased Beanie Babies in quantities for all of my younger relatives.)

- This year, I expect that dinosaurs and electronic babies will be at the top of the lists. So why not help children make "mini-Jurassic Parks" in dress boxes or soda cartons to complement storebought dinosaurs. Let children use real rocks and pebbles and twigs as well as drawing trees and bushes on the insides of the box. Add red and orange cellophane over foil for an erupting volcano.
- Children can make accessories for electronic babies such as journal books and mini birthday cakes, made of play dough or clay.
- Use old decks of cards to challenge children to make up new games. Let children dictate the rules to you. Then print out the rules and put them in the card packs.
- Checkerboards can be made by letting children do a color-by-number project. Recycled milk caps make great checkers. You can also create a circular checkerboard, such as the one used in Chinese Checkers.

- Cut the tops off of milk bottles and turn them into catching jugs for taped paper balls that are attached to the handles with yarn or string.
- Older children might like to print their own coupon booklets Younger children can dictate what they can do for the coupons and an adult can type them on address labels on a computer. Children can then put them on a card or poster for a loved one.
- Older children can make a pin cushion with fabric, foam, and two canning jar rings and thread and knot assorted colored thread on needles for grandparents who might have trouble doing so or for moms in a hurry.
- Many grown-ups would appreciate bird feeders as gifts and there's an endless list of materials that can be reused in making them.
- Picture frames can be made out of wallpaper sample books, decorated wooden ice cream spoons in symmetrical patterns, or empty square holiday tissue boxes with oval openings.
- Encourage your children to give of themselves to their friends with gifts such as friendship bracelets, and game book-

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS



You'll Need: 2 pieces of yarn (2 different colors—24-36 inches long each)

What to Do:

1. Put pieces of yarn together and knot at one end.

2. Attach knotted end to a hook or door knob or, even better, have a child hold the end.

3. Have another child twist pieces of yarn in one direction until pieces become taut.

4. With one hand, grab yarn in the middle. With the other hand, remove knotted end from hook (or door knob or child's hand) and join with other end.

5. Release middle and watch while yarn twists around itself.

6. Tie around wrist.

lets with grids for tic-tac-toe, hangman, and mazes. Fantastic hockey and soccer-type games can be made in dress boxes with checkers for pucks and chopsticks for sticks. Mini-ping-pong tables can also be made using onion bag nets and discarded plastic lid paddles.

@ For your own classes, you may wish to make a mini-magnetic fishing game with magnetic tape on thin dowel sticks and paper clips on the fish. Write silly tasks on each fish. For example, *Try to catch a fish while hopping on one foot.*

@ Tape funny instructions all over a beach ball. For example: *Jump like a bunnygaroo.* Have children throw the ball to each other. Wherever the right thumb lands when the ball is caught is what is read aloud and done.

@ Take pictures of a each child doing a holiday activity. Glue the photo on a piece of construction paper that the child should decorate and "sign." Laminate the sheets to create special place mats.

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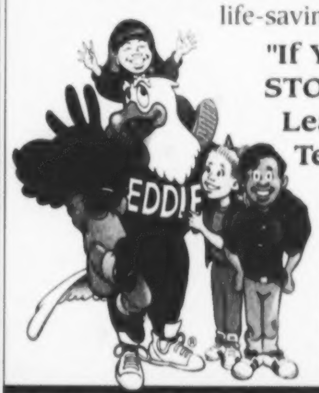

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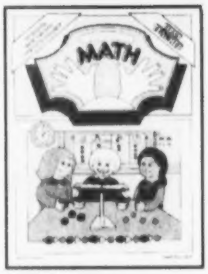

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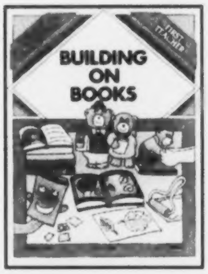

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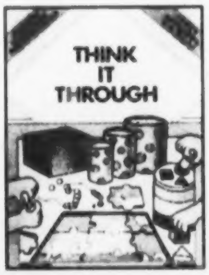

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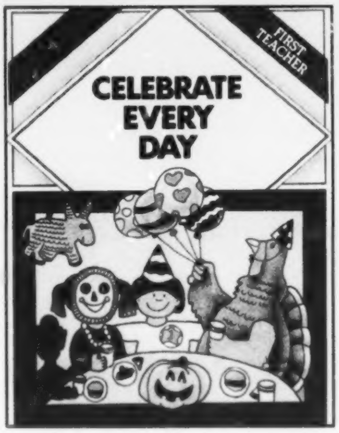

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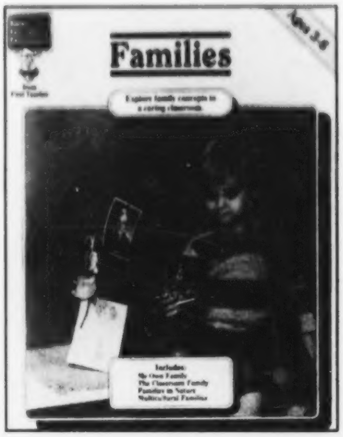

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